NAAM OR WORD

Kirpal Singh

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Dedicated
to the Almighty God
working through all Masters who have come
and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
at whose lotus feet
the writer imbibed sweet elixir of
Holy Naam—the Word.

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SAWAN SPIRITUAL SERIES No. 8

NAAM OR WORD

by

Kripal Singh

RUHANI SATSANG, SAWAN ASHRAM
DELHI 6, INDIA
1960

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68444
BL
625
K57

First Edition, January 1960
2,000 Copies

3957
R23
Y55

Published by
Ruhani Satsang—Sawan Ashram
Gur Mandi, Delhi-6
India

© KIRPAL SINGH 1960

Hari Printers, Karolbagh, New Delhi-5

To the Honest Seeker

We have an Upanishadic text that tells us that Truth is one, though sages have described it variously. But to define It is to limit, and since Truth (i.e. the whole truth) is illimitable, It, by Its very nature, remains undefined. It is more a matter of inner experience and realisation than of comprehension and apprehension on the intellectual level.

"The surest way unto Truth", says Henri Bergson, the great philosopher, "is by perception, by intuition, by reasoning to a certain point and then by taking a mortal leap."

Again, "true knowledge is an action of the soul and is perfect without the senses", says Ben Jonson. The reality can neither be known by the senses, nor by the mind or the intellect, nor by the vital airs that keep the physical frame, alike of the Universe and the individual agoing.

"Man is a little world made cunningly of elements and an angelic spirit"—J. Donne. He is a composite entity that unites in himself the physical, the subtle and the causal principles: the body, the mind, the supermind and the soul, one behind the other, the last one being the source of all life, nay the very life-principle enlivening everything that lives.

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There is within the all-comprehending ambit of animal instincts, some secret urge which drives the chosen few, called the elect, towards the transcending of animal impulses, leading to complete disinterestedness by total disregard of the animal-ego on the one hand and willing submission to a self-sought death on the other, in spite of the strong opposition of instincts, impulses and ego arrayed against an inspired soul. There is a subtle communication between mystery and mystery, between the unknown soul and the unknown Reality and it is only at one particular point in the texture of life that the hidden Truth seems to burst through the enveloping veils of ignorance and this happens only when one is able to disimprison the soul from the facts of life. John Keats, the great Romantic poet, speaks of this blissful state in his own inimitable way,—

"Wherein lies happiness ? In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship Divine
A fellowship with Essence ; till we shine
Full alchemized and free of space."

The secret of Truth then lies in the little 'great self' in Man, the self, the seemingly little thing of no consequence neglected and cast aside and almost lost in the mighty swirl of mind and matter, and yet a great thing once it comes to its own after breaking through the prison-bars of life, the life of the senses that keeps one

enmeshed all the time. The inner man or the spirit-in-man is therefore to be freed from the tentacles of the outer man, consisting of matter and mind, before the self can rise in self-conciousness and becomes aware of the Cosmic Awareness. All this is a practical possibility by a process of self-analysis and withdrawal and not a mere figment of the imagination or a wild goose-chase as most of us think it to be. As 'self-knowledge' precedes 'God-knowlege,' all the sages and seers have from time immemorial laid emphasis on 'Gnothe Seauton' or 'Nosce Teipsum' as known among the ancient Greeks and Romans respectively. And to know oneself, one must detach one's self from the life of the senses. This is exactly what Jesus meant when he taught, "he that findeth his life shall lose it" and "he that loseth his life shall find it." Thus one has to choose between the two lives: the life of the senses and flesh on the one hand and the life of the spirit and Awareness on the other, for one cannot have both at the same time, and unless one is able to rise above the body-consciousness, one cannot make his or her choice between the two. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Guru Nanak has said,—

"Without actual transcension of the spirit
The magic spell of the world dissolves not."

This then is the way Truthwards or Godwards. "Truth is One," says Nanak, "and comes as a pure and simple gift from a Master of Truth." When we say "One," that too is incorrect for that means limiting the Limitless and finitising the Infinite. Kabir, therefore, speaks of God or Truth,—

"If I say He is one that too is inapt,
The idea of duality in Him is but a blasphemy.
He is what He is, neither the one nor the other,
Something, yet whole and self-contained."

The numeral 'One' is but a pointer and an index to the Great Being beyond numerology Itself. Guru Nanak, while speaking of Truth, tells us,—

"Truth was when there was nothing;
Truth was before all ages began;
Truth existeth now, O Nanak!
And Truth shall exist forever more." —Jap Ji

"Absolute Truth" is of course imageless, but when It came into being, Its primal manifestations were the Sound and the Light Principles: collectively called 'Nad' in the Vedas, 'Udgit' in in the Upanishadas, 'Sraosha' in Zend Avesta, 'Word' in the Holy Gospels, 'Kalima' in Al Koran, 'Naam' or 'Shabd' in the Holy Granth—all signifying the two-fold aspect of the Divine Nature or the Creative Life Principle in Nature.

"Nameless and devoid of all forms He is,
And yet all names and forms are His."

The great Rishis and Munis, we are told, had a direct inner contact with Truth or the Godhead within. To Moses were revealed the sacred precepts of the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments in the midst of Thunder and Flame signifying the twin aspect of Truth Itself. The Prophet Mohammed had to cut his way throug hthe moon—Shaq-ul-Qamar—as he ascended on the wings of lightning (Burq). Prince Siddharath, when he contacted the light within, came to be known as Buddha or the Enlightened one. Christ assured his following of his true nature, in no idle words,—

"I am the Light of the world, and he that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life."

And, again,—

"If thine eye be 'single', thy whole body shall be full of Light."

"Mysticism', says Dean Inge, 'is the core of religion', and language has no means of conveying the super-sensual experiences of the mystics. "The Light shineth in the Darkness and the Darkness comprehendeth It not," is the fate of the common man to-day."

"Man's spirit can return to God through the deepest of man's conflicts and negations... (and by) total denial of his finite being."

—A.C. Bradley.

Walter De La Mare, in his 'Dreams', gives us a glimpse of,—

"And once—from agony set free—
I scanned within the womb of night,
A hollow in-woven orb of light.
Thrilling with beauty, no tongue could tell,
And knew it for life's Citadel."

Both soul and God live together in the holy temple of the human body, but alas ! one has not known the other. About this inborn relationship, St. Catherine tells us,—

"God is in the soul and the soul is in God,"
As the sea is in the fish and the fish is in the sea."

"But can we have this beatific vision ? 'Yes', say the Masters, 'as two and two make four.'

"Feel we these thinge ? that moment have we stept
Into a sort of Oneness, and our state
Is like a floating Spirits." —J. Keats.

To return to the point from which we began, namely, that Truth is infinite and can be only inwardly realised and not mentally comprehended, let us touch upon the claims of science. Science too declares that it seeks to arrive at Truth in an objective and a detached fashion, called the Scientific Way, and most of its adherents even go on to say that science is the only means to Truth, for mysticism and spiritual realisation are too personal, too subjective and

too rare a phenomenon to be trusted. But can science really bring us to Truth? Can we equate factual knowledge with Truth? Does not Truth imply a knowledge not only of the various objects composing the sum total of existence but also their inter-relations to the finest degree, and is not this aspect of Truth the more important one? Science of course does give us factual knowledge about objects and to some extent their inter-relations as well. But science at least at present, seems to be an endless process: the findings of to-day being out-dated by those of to-morrow. Thus its picture of Truth whatever it may be, is an ever shifting one and in fact it can never be a picture of Truth for Truth in Its very nature is changeless. The adherents of science fail to see this significant limitation of science for they mistake knowledge for Truth and forget that if science is to be our only means to Truth, then man can never hope to reach that goal. Looking on the other side of the picture, the side which we have already discussed, there is the incontroverted testimony of the saints and the mystics who tell us that Truth can be realised by man and who go on to say, that a pursuit of objective factual knowledge is a distraction from It. The poets speak of intuitive moments when they feel the presence of a spiritual unity behind the material diversity.

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts : a sense sublime,
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

—Wordsworth.

While the mystics of all times and climes tell us with one voice that this inner Reality or Truth is not only a matter of intuition and feeling but of actual super-sensuous realisation, and it is in this connection that the study of Yoga—Surat Shabd Yoga in particular—reveals its importance. We cannot, if we really seek the Truth, afford to ignore spirituality, as so many modern thinkers have tended to do, for it is a highway to Truth, and as suggested, perhaps the only highway to Truth. It is in this context that an attempt has been made to explain in this book the basic concept (which of course is the same in spite of an endless variety in the nomenclature) of the various words used by the Masters to signify the Wordless in His primordial manifestation—the life current creating, sustaining and controlling the endless creation.

My heartfelt thanks to Shri Bhadra Sena especially and others who took great pains in helping to bring out this work and spent many hours in this labour of love.

Kirpal Singh

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Man Know Thyself

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Prajapatir vai idam-agre asit
Tasya vak dvitiya asit
Vak vai Paramam Brahma
— Vedas

In the beginining was Prajapati (the Creator),
With Him was the vak (the Word),
And the vak (the Word) was veríly the Supreme Brahma.

NAAM OR WORD

'Naam' is easier said then known and practiced. It is only an adept in the mysteries of this simple Naam, who knows its true significance and the great Power that lies hidden in it. Apparently it is just a syllable, but what it connotes is beyond understanding even by the most learned in book knowledge though it may be possible to apprehend it through the grace of one well versed not only in the theory but in the practice as well of the Word.

'Name' and the 'named' are, in fact, one and the same. There is hardly any distinction between the two : one is the abstract form of that which is concrete. Light cannot be separated from the sun. The two go together all the world over. Similarly Godhood and God cannot be demarcated and set aside in water-tight compartments as two separate entities. The former is just an attribute of the latter. 'Naam' is nothing more nor less than Godhood of God ; one must call it what one may like—the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, etc. It is the primal manifestation of God, responsible for the entire

creation. It is the primeval form of God. St. John speaks of it,—

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of man. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

In these memorable words, St. John has tried to give us some idea of the marvellous nature of the Word or Naam, as it is also called. It combines in it the triple principle of Creation, Sustenance and Destruction—the *Trimurti* of the Hindu mythology of *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Shiva*: the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer respectively: all the three deriving their motor power from Godhood or God-in-action, Naam or Word.

Hazrat Moieen-ud-Din Chisti, in this context, sayeth,—

"Name and the Named are but one,
Light of Name witnesseth His glory."

All that is, is of and from Naam, for it prevades everywhere. It is the life principle of the entire creation. He in whom this Word or Naam becomes personified is called a saint for it is said that 'Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.' Such a one has reached the

summum bonum of life and gained the El-Dorado of human existence. For him there is nothing more to wish for and aspire after. On the other hand, one who has not been able, during his life time, to establish a contact with Naam, he at the time of death quits the body like a defeated gambler who leaves a gambling den with empty hands. Sant kabir saith :

"Better by far is a leper with weeping sores, if established in Naam,
Rather than a fine stalwart swain who knows not the value of Naam."

Greatness of Naam and its Need :

The access to spiritual regions cannot be gained except with the wings of Naam. A Persian poet says,—

"It behoves thee to fly to the higher realms and that thou cans't do so with the wings of Naam."

Again,—

"If thou wishest union with Truth, thou must get united with Naam (i.e. Word or the manifest form of Truth unmanifested) for therein lies the only possible union with Truth. The constant meditation of Name means constant companionship with the Named."

A touch with the Divine-current purifies a person of all iniquities. All doubts and distractions become airy nothings and the mind

becomes steady and firm, with the result that God's light is reflected therein.

"If thou were to cleanse the mirror of thy mind
with the sweet remembrance of His name,
His glory shall surely shine within thee."

Kabir Sahib has beautifully described the value of Naam thus,—

"'Naam' may appear but a monosyllable
compared with the countless sins that
abound ;
But a little dose of the Naam when taken,
reduces the entire garbage to a heap of
ashes ;
And the practice of the Naam rubs clean all the
mental impurities ;
For the Naam acts as a spark of fire in a
powder magazine ;
By communion with the Naam, one transcends
the limitations of the flesh ;
And reaches far beyond the realm of the pairs
of opposites."

Again,—

"All the supernal powers serve but Naam,
Blessed with Naam, one wants naught,
United with Naam, one becomes the abode of all
powers."

A contact with Naam assures salvation to all: whether good or bad, learned or unlettered. As sun and fire give warmth and light to all, snow and ice give exhilarating freshness, so

Naam cannot fail to produce its effect, no matter how the contact may come about, irrespective of the fact whether it has come about with or without faults. Khwaja Nizam-ud-Din Chisti saith :

"The glory of God's Naam has attuned my body and soul,
The parched and thirsty get honeyed nectar from it."

God's Names and Efficient Power Par Excellence :

The sages and the saints have described God in innumerable terms, as for instance 'Swami' or 'Soami' meaning Lord God ; 'Nirala' (peerless or without a compeer) ; 'Anami' (the nameless) ; 'Har Rai' 'Agam' or 'Alakh' (the incomprehensible or the ineffable) ; or 'Ram Rai' ; 'Sat Purush' or 'Sat Naam' (the eternal Truth or unchangeable permanence) ; 'Ek Ankar' (the one life breath or live principle) ; 'Puran Chetan Purush' (Complete Consciousness) ; 'Akal' (Timeless or the deathless one).

All these are just attributive or qualitative names—names signifying one or other of God's attributes. Such names simply describe any one aspect or facet of God as appealed foremost to individual liking. Thousands of such names appear in holy scriptures : Ram (All-pervading), Rahim (Gracious or merciful), Girdhari (Encompassing), Murari, Allah, Khuda, Wah-i-Guru, and the like. The jews call Him, Jove or Jehova.

All these names are worthy of our adoration for each one of them tries to single out some aspect of the Beloved.

"I revere each one of Thy names, O God !"

—Basant M.1

What is Naam ?

We talk and hear a lot about Naam, but never for a moment pause to ponder over what It is and how to gain salvation or Nirvana, through it.

"What is that Name, the remembrance whereof leads to Nirvana." —Ramkali M.9

Again,—

"What is that name, the repetition whereof enables a person to cross over the world of sorrows." —Sorath M.9

In fact the Lord God is nameless, but we have given Him myriad of names. What name can indeed describe the Formless, the Limitless, the Incomprehensible, One beyond the grasp of senses and the intellect? Still man has, through the ages, endeavoured to put Him in the trammels of words and clothe Him with epithets just for the sake of expression, though all combined together fail hopelessly to do any justice to Him. After all words do come from a limited source and cannot possibly limit the Limitless :

"I all the mountains were pounded into ink-powder and mixed with the waters of the oceans, pens were made out of all the forest

trees, and the entire earth were a sheet of paper, the glory of God or Naam or God-into-expression Power could not even then be described." —Sahjobai

"All names are Thine and so are all forms Thine, but all fail to enumerate Thy countless attributes." —Asa M.1

"Thou embraces in Thee all powers and potentialities, all riches and treasures for Thou art the Primeval Cause, the Causeless Cause both material and efficient. The Lord of all, Thy names are numberless."

—Dev Gandhari M.5

"God has names beyond our comprehension. He cannot be known and no name can describe Him,

The learned and the unlettered have done their very best but have not been able to evaluate even a particle of His greatness."

—Kalyan M.4

"O God ! so many art Thy names, that the poor tongue faileth to enumerate them."

—Bhairon M.4

Guru Gobind Singh ji, the tenth Guru, saith ;

"Who can sing of the glory of all Thy names,
Still the wise tell us of Thy attributes."

All names fall into two categories :

(i) *'Karam Naam'* or names indicative of *Gunas* or *Swabhava*, which may be likened to qualitative or attributive names ;

like Ram, Rahim and Karim (i e. all-pervading, merciful and compassionate).

(ii) *'Pura Purbala Naam'* or personal names which are all-comprehensive, ancient and eternal.

"We generally sing the glory of God with man-made names,
But His Great Name—Sat Naam—is eternally the same." —Maru M.5

The question that now arises is one of choice : which of these countless names is the most efficacious and speedily fruitful. The Hindus in general glorify 'Om' and speak highly of 'Ram-Naam'. The Mohammedans prefer 'Allah' and the Sikhs 'Wahi-i-Guru'. Every religious order has thus adopted one or the other name, as a central tenet and make use of the same in their daily worship and devotion. To confine one's self to any of these exculsively would mean making God partial. Our quest leads us to a number of issues like :

(a) Selection of the most fruitful name,

(b) Mode of repetition : Should the name selected be repeated mentally or through meditation on the meaning of the word selected.

If we refer to the Sikh sacred literature, we come across varied references some dealing with 'Japa' or Repitition, other with 'Sunan' or hearing, 'Manan' or acceptance, 'Dhyan' or meditation and still others with constant dwelling on it

and last but not the least, of Self-illumination and of Sound-principle as well.

"Remember Naam, O my brethren-in-faith,
This grants peace, O keep the mind ever fixed in Naam." —Asa M.4

"By hearing Naam, the mind gets stilled,
The greatness of Naam is known through the Master." —Asa M.4

"Commune with Naam till the last breath of life,
This brings proximity to God and He saves in the end." —Sri Rag M.4

"Those who contact not the Naam, why do they come into the world ?
Arid is the field of life for them and they die a miserable death." —Jaitsri M.4

"The devotees of the Lord are His representatives and unto them we pray,
We the filthy worms are at their feet, let the Divine light fill us through." —Gujri M.4

"A contact with the Sound-current gives self-realisation which is the Summum Bonum of life. By it one is washed of all impurities of the mind and easily merges into Life Divine. O Nanak ! this contact is established by a rare Gurmukh." —Sarang War M.4

"A contact with Naam makes one self-luminous, with luminosity vieing with myriads of suns." —Jaitsri M.5

"By Thy grace manifest the Divine light of Naam." —Gujri M.4

In Naam there is perfect food, both for the eyes and the ears. Next we hear of the sinking in and dwelling of Naam in the tablet of the mind. It is clearly stated in the sacred Sikh scriptures that this contact can only be had beyond the domain of senses and sensory organs :

"Naam is not the subject of the eyes. It is something wonderful and indescribable."

—Maru M.I

References like these lead to but one irresistible conclusion that the true Naam is something beyond this or that word. It is a great magnetic Power, and a force that can grip the mind. It is characterised by sweet strains and melodious tunes, which can be heard and a powerful flash-light which can be seen and witnessed. It is this Naam or Power and Force of Godhead which cannot be comprehended by the senses and can only be realised and experienced in Super-sensual planes. It is a Life-current that pervades the entire creation and is hence called Ram Naam or All-Embracing Impulse. Kabir Sahib says,—

"There are myriads of names in the world, but none of them can grant salvation,
The Primeval Name is a hidden one and a rare soul can know and realise it."

Oral repetition of names has its own place and utility, and is needed for some purpose but

it cannot lead to self-realisation and God-realisation, both of which can be achieved only through contact with God-in-action, call it what we may—Shabd, Ram-Naam, Kalma, Word, Sruti, Sarosha etc. and this contact can come about only through the Grace of some competent living Master.

"Everyone is repeating the 'Monosyllable Ram' but gets no touch with the 'Power Ram' behind the monosyllable ;

It is the Grace of the Master alone that can give a living touch with the All-Embracing Life Impulse and the wish-yielding elixir."

A thirsty traveller can neither quench his thirst nor can refresh himself by simply crying for 'water', unless he actually gets the substance water. Yari Sahib, therefore, saith :

"The tongue tires itself out by repeating the word 'Ram',

The repetition of the word 'water' never quenches the thirst,

One may slake the thirst by taking a draught of water."

Kabir Sahib, in this context, speaks thus,—

"Mere repetition of this or that name, without an actual touch with the named, is of no avail. If one were to become rich by calling for riches, then there would hardly be one without being rich."

Nameless is He and yet all names are His. If one could but get in touch with His Power,

all names become inconsequential for actual contact is what matters and not the words. If a thirsty person were to get the substance water to quench his thirst, it does not matter if he calls for it, as, Aab (in Persian), Water (in English), Aqua (in Latin), Eau (in French), Ma (in Arabic) or Hudor (in Greek) for his purpose is served by any of these words. Similarly, the word 'bread' is quite a different thing from the real bread. While one is just an expression used to distinguish it apart from the other, which is the real bread that dispels hunger. So one must strive to contact the reality than to run after the shadowy words that stand for the reality.

From a mere name one has to get to the named before one can have the real benefit, a satisfaction to the ever-inner urge for filling in the inner vacuum of the soul. Maulana Rumi saith :

"O thou repeater of the Name, go and search out the Named,
Without the Named, how can a mere name give thee comfort?"

Sant Tulsi Das, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana or the Biography of 'Lord Rama', has given precedence to 'Naam' over both *Rama* and *Brahma*, since Naam is at once the Creator and the controlling Power of *Brahma, Parbrahma, Satnaam, Alakh* and *Agam*.

(1) "In magnanimity and large-heartedness, Naam far excells both *Brahm* and *Rama*."

(2) "Personal and Impersonal God are the two aspects of Brahm for He is at once indescribable, beginingless, incomprehensibe and formless. I feel that Naam far transcends these two; for both of them are within its controlling power, from age to age. Though both *Brahm* and *Ram* are beyond comprehension, yet they can be known and realised through Naam. I therefore say that Naam is greater than both *Ram* and *Brahm*."

(3) "I cannot possibly sing the greatness of Naam. Even the blessed Lord Rama himself can hardly do any justice to the glory of Naam."

The last dictum of Sant Tulsi Das is significant indeed. Rama is said to be the incarnation of Brahm, and the latter with the entire heirarchy upwards is the by-product or creation of Naam. In Jap Ji Sahib, Guru Nanak also refers to it pertinently :

"There is one spirit that has created the Universe ; and given over its control to the three guardian angels: *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Siva*: one of whom is entrusted with the task of creation, the

other with that of sustenance or maintenance and the third with that of administering justice according to the Divine Law. That spirit always keeps a watchful eye on the works of all the three, but the latter have no knowledge of it. —Pauri 30

The majority of the multitudinous world has forgotten the Reality—the Ever-enduring Spirit or Naam and are mightily busy in parrot-like repetition of the so many names of that Spirit, with the result that they keep engrossed all the time in gathering husk and chaff instead of the grain. Hence all their hard labour goes unfruitful and they live in a famished state without getting any satisfaction :

"Those who ignore Naam or the Power of God and are busy with various other names are just like muck-worms wallowing in filth."

—Sarang M.3

"The scriptural studies, the religious debates are all *Mayaic* or illusory and shadowy nothings,

O Nanak ! except Naam, nothing is stable and all acts not centred on Naam, are fruitless."

—Sri Rag War M.3

"Verily, verily, O Nanak ! the true study is the study of Naam." —Sarang War M.3

"Bookish knowledge is all wordly wisdom."

—Sorath M.3

"Hari Naam is the essence of all religions."

—Gauri M.5

"Everyone wants happiness but gets what God may ordain,
All acts of devotion and charity count for nothing when compared with Naam."

—Wadhans M.1

"Naam far excells *Japa*, *Tapa*, deeds of charity and the like,
A contact with Naam gets all desires fulfilled."

—Asa M.5

"One cannot by the study of the scriptures, cross the ocean of life,
Naam far transcends all acts of piety and charity." —Asa M.5

Naam is a Power and a Motor Force behind everything and hence outer actions like pilgrimages to holy places, acts of the charity, fasts, penances, yajnas or sacrificial oblations to fire and the like are of no avail to a seeker after Truth. Naam alone is the link between God and man. It is with the help of Naam that one can traverse to higher regions. It serves as an electric lift that can safely carry a spirit yearning for God-realisation. Except Naam, there is no other Path Godwards.

"The body may be consigned to the flames or cut to pieces. The mind and the body may be made an offering and allowed to be consumed from day to day. All such penances

and austerities are of no consequence when compared with Hari Naam.

The body may be cut in twain and the head be cut off for an offering or else it may be allowed to rot in the Himalayan snows, yet none of these acts can cure the mind. But alas, these have no efficacy for we have tried them all with no avail.

One may give millions in charity including horses and elephants, lands and kine, yet these will make him a bloated coxcomb. It is only Ram Naam (the all-pervading Sound-current) that can still the mind and it comes as a pure gift from a Master-soul. All intellectual wranglings, hathyogic practices, scriptural studies are but the varied types of karmic bondages. The only way to freedom and salvation is a Master-saint." —Sri Rag M.I

"Truth is greater than everything but higher still is true living." —Sri Rag M.I

In Sukhmani, we have a wonderful account of Naam,—

"The rosary, the penances, knowledge and cogitation,

The study of shastras, smritis and scriptures,

The yogic practices and the performances of rites and rituals,

A life of solitude in the deep recesses of the forests,

All endeavours of various types, including deeds of charity for name and fame, cutting of limbs in self conceit,

All these and more still, do not come upto the merit of Naam,

O Nanak! a beloved of the Master is ever engaged in communion with the Word.

Circumambulation of the globe and a life of longevity,

Observance of austerities coupled with renunciation,

Life spent in the midst of five fires, or one devoted to charitable deeds like giving away of wordly possessions,

The observance of *Neoli Karm*[a] and many other Yogic postures as enjoined by Jain scriptures,

And even a holocaust of one's body inch by inch,

All these and still more fail to purify the dirt of egotism,

Nothing comes upto the merit of Naam,

O Nanak! a beloved of the Master saves himself through communion with the Naam.

Even the desire to die at a sacred place does not rid one of his egoism,

All efforts to purify the body cannot sanctify the mind,

(a) These are many Yogic postures, 84 amongst which are the most important—Neoli Karm is one of them—It is a posture in which the breath is held inside and the bowels are made to move both sides, right and left, so as to clear away waste matter from them.

All physical practices cannot drive away the mental impurities,
All the methodical washings of the body cannot wash clean the clay-house,
The Power of Naam far transcends all these,
O Nanak! It has a saving grace even for the worst of sinners." —Gauri M.5

"The Vedas, the smritis and all other sacred scriptures unanimously proclaim that besides Naam there is no other *Sadhan* for spiritual advancement, for all else is a mere idle talk.
—Suhi M.5

"Nanak has the riches of Naam to dole out."
—Bhairon M.5

All the saints and seers in all times and in all climes were ever devoted to Naam and gave to the world lessons in Naam:

"Nanak and Kabir both taught the science of the Naam,
And I too have manifested the Naam within me,
Dhru and Prahlad were intoxicated with the elixir of the Naam,
And Lord Siva too is ever engaged in meditating on Naam." —Dulan Das

The world reveres those who have sought the path of the Naam for Naam can transform sinners into saints, for it ennobles and purifies:

"By practicing the science of inversion, one becomes world famous,

Even Valmik, a well known highway man, acquired the status of a Brahm." —Tulsi Das

The lovers of God are ever engaged in the practice of the Word :

"Whether awake or asleep and in whatever condition,
O Nanak ! they while doing everything remain contacted within." —Gauri M.5

In the scriptures of all the religions, there are references to the Power of the Word :

"All the religions are deeply rooted in the Naam,
There is no religion higher than that of the Naam." —Gauri M.5

Again,

"The practice of the Naam is the noblest of all virtues." —Gauri M.5

Devotion to Naam is the only True Worship :

The significance of Naam (the true devotion of God) cannot be put in words :

"Rare indeed is the devotion to Naam (or Hari),
We cannot do full justice to the greatness of Naam." —Ramkali M.3

Naam alone is immaculate and everything else is of no consequence. What then can we give in offering ?

"But we are all as an unclean thing,
And all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."
—Isiah 64 : 6

Whatever we say and utter in praise of Naam is inadequate. The entire mankind is

indeed engaged in singing praises of Naam and in the performance of the devotional exercises. But as all this is being done on the intellectual level and on the plane of the senses, it does not bear any appreciable fruit. A rare soul here and there, who is born anew through Naam or the Power of God is truly immaculate. Only such a devotion is acceptable at His Court. There is no other devotion like that. Such a soul always cries out :

"The Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. —Psalms 119 : 105

St. Paul tells us,—

"The Word of God is quick (living) and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and interests of the heart." —Hebrews 4 : 12

As we do not know what Naam is and its true significance, we live as if in a dome of many coloured glass which by its bewildering effect deludes the senses. All our prayers are but a confused jargon and our words, though loud and strong, vanish into thin air and yield no results.

"Everyone does worship, but on the sensual plane only and so gets no results,

But absorption in the Naam purifies the mind and bears fruit in abundance,

Those who are devotees of the Naam are truly pure and beloved of the Lord,

But for the Naam all other worship goes in vain, and the people at large are deluded.

The beloved of the Master (Guru-mukh) knows himself by coming in contact with the all-pervading Word (Naam),

The immaculate Lord Himself becoming the guide contacts the soul with the Sound-current,

Those who worship with no proper guidance, remain wandering in the realm of duality,

A devotee of the Master alone knows the Path and bows before His Will."

—Ramkali M.3

Naam is the great controlling power :

"By the Word of God were the heavens made ; and all the host of them... He spake and it it was done ; He commanded, and it stood fast." —Psalms 33 : 6-9

"Through Him the universe is a harmonious Whole." —Collossians 1 : 17

Naam or Word is the chief controlling power. It is the only support that one can have either in this world or in the next :

"I need no obsequies after my death,

I depend wholly on Sat Naam, the maker of all, and pervading all here and hereafter.

—Asa M.1

Naam is beginningless and endless. It is invariable and unchanging permanence, ancient and eternal.

"Leaving aside all thy learning and cunning
worship the Great Formless Beyond Brahm,
Except the Naam all others fall away."
—Asa M.5

Again,—

"Excepting the True Naam, the rest is all trash.
Four things alone are eternal and lasting;
Naam or Sound-current, Sadhu or a disciplined soul well established in Word, Guru or Word-personified with a divine commission to contact others with the Naam and lastly, Gobind or the Lord God—the eternally Formless One." —Shalok M.9

Everything is within the controlling power of Naam :

"Naam is just a pure gift from God,
He alone may get the gift through the Guru,
whomsoever He may grant,
O Nanak ! all is within the mighty grip of the Naam,
He alone is blessed with Word, who may be so ordained. —Asa M.3

Naam is the Great Master Force :

Word or Naam is the Sound-current or Sound-principle. This current or principle lay merged in the Great Silence and was hence nameless. There was then nothing but deep

Silence with no name or pattern, no design or form and no colour or shade. The life vibration (principle) hidden therein, stirred the Great Deep and there came a Great Sound called Word and the whole creation came into being, and is being sustained by this. With the withdrawal of the Naam or Sound there sets in disintegration and decay in all that lives, with consequent putrefaction and the result is dissolution which in common parlance is known as death. Thus this Sound is at once the beginning and the end of all that exists:

"He—the Nameless—expressed Himself and made the Naam or Word." —Asa War M.I

It is called variously as—Sound; *Sruti* (that which is heard); *Shabd* or *Akashbani* (voice from the heaven); *Udgit, Sarosha* (music of the Beyond); Word or Harmony; *Logos* or the Holy Ghost; *Kalma* or *Bang-i-Illhai* (call from God) or *Nida-i-Asmani* (heavenly sound).

"Thou manifested Thyself as Naam and set up the creation. Out of the Formless proceeded forms in varying degrees." —Asa War M.I

This entire extentionalism is just of the Naam and there is nothing which is not of Him:

"Thou art immanent in all;
And nothing is where Thy Word is not."

—Jap Ji 19

Again,—

"All that is of life and all that is of matter is from the Naam (whether visible or invisible),

Without a Master-soul one cannot have contact with the Naam." —Suhi M.3

It may, here, be necessary to tell in brief of the four Grand Divisions of the Universe. These Grand Divisions are :

(i) *Sach Khand* or of the Region of *Satnaam* : This Region is of pure spirit unalloyed by matter.

(ii) *Par Brahm* and the *Brahmand* : Here spirit and subtle from of matter combine in varying degrees, yet spirit is the ruling force.

(iii) *Und*, where spirit and matter in its gross form combine. Here, the spirit, for its manifestation, has to depend on matter. It comprises of *Trikuti* and *Sahasrar*.

(iv) *Pind* or the physical plane where the spirit lies dormant under a heap of matter in its grossest form.

Naam or Word is both the Creator and the Sustainer of the Universe :

"The Naam or Word is the Power of God that has created the universe,
The same Power is sustaining all by its immanence in every form." —Sri Rag M.4

"Everything comes into being and lives by the Naam or power of God,
Forgetting the Naam, we breathe hollow."
—Sorath M.3

"Upholding all things by the Word of His Power." —Hebrews 1 : 3

"And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." —Collossians 1 : 17

"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made,
And all the host of them...for He spake, and it was done ; He commanded, and it stood fast." —Psalms 33 : 6-19

"Through Him the Universe is a harmonious whole." —Collossians 1 : 17

"There were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water by the Word of God ; by which means the world perished ; but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same Word have been stored up against the Day of Judgment...
– 2 Peter 3 : 5-7, 13

"Word is at once the Creator and the Sustainer of the Universe." —Gauri M.5

"Word transcends all forms and all names,
They who worship, the Word, alone live."
—Gauri M.5

"Word sustains the entire creation,
He is the Kernal in every shell."
—Gauri M.5

Dryden, in his song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687), refers to it as Harmony,—

"From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony,
This Universal frame began ;

When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head
The tuneful voice was heard from high
Arise, Ye more than dead !
From Harmony, from heavenly Harmony
This Universal frame began :
From Harmony to Harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man."

Word or Naam is the Great Progenitor or the Primeval Cause of the entire creation with the various divisions high and low. We have the testimony of Guru Arjan in this behalf,—

"Naam is the life-principle in all that lives,
Naam is the foundation-stone of the Cosmos with its divisions.
Naam is the Creator of Heavens and Nether lands,
Naam is the Manifester of all forms.
Naam is the sub-strata of all regions,
Naam is the liberator from all bondage."

—Gauri M.5

The various *Khandas* or Planes exist because of Naam and different *Yugas* or Classifications of time owe their origin to Naam :

"There is but one source of the different divisions of time and Universe. This has been revealed to me by the Master-soul. Naam is a great store-house of all that one may

wish for. Why then should I move out for this or that." —Gauri M.5

Naam : What it is ?

All scriptures speak of Naam but have not been able to say adequately enough as to what It is ? It is impossible to define and delineate It in so many words. It may conveniently be described as 'life-impulse' or 'conscious-principle'. When it begins to vibrate, it produces tuneful sound, which is termed as Naam or Shabd. This Sound-current proceeding from the deep Silence of the Formless *Kutasth* is responsible for all forms and colours, visible and invisible to the naked eyes. All life hangs on this life-principle. No life can exist without Naam. The Sound-principle is all-pervading, though it may or may not be felt, yet it is reverberating from top to toe. It is the Kernel, and the Essence and at once both the material and efficient Cause of the endless universes in which this physical earth is but a speck.

"O Pipa! this universal vibration is the Primal Causeless Cause,
But can be apprehended only through a Master-soul."

In all religions, God is spoken of as the Sound-manifest. It is a current, live and conscious and has in It the germs of creation. It is spoken of as 'Life-Principle'. It is because of this link between the Creator and the creation, that the

spirit or soul of a person can cross over the physical body and traverses the spiritual regions to reach the True Home of our Father—The Sachkhand. From scriptures we learn that Sound-principle or Naam is of two kinds: (i) the outer and (ii) the inner. The former comprises, words of mouth or words that may be spoken out or written down and recorded. This constitutes all learning and knowledge at intellectual level and is termed as *Apra-Vidya* or knowledge of the world and the worldly surroundings. All worldly wisdom is included therein. It is also called '*Varn-Atmak*', for with it *Atma* or Soul can express itself and functions in the world. All book knowledge is because of Varn-Atmak Shabd. Comprehension of world and worldly relations depends on this type of Shabd which helps outwardly i.e. in the physical plane. It serves as the means of conveying ideas and emotions from man to man, just as any other animal would do. 'Outer-Sound' then serve as the first step, in the study of the science of the spirit. Theory precedes practice and the Master-saint has to make use of it, for explaining this most abstruse subject. Again *Japa* or Oral repetition of certain words or names of God is to be done by 'Varn-Atmak Shabd'. The preliminary training of the mind is the first essential on this Path and hence the need for outer sound or Shabd. Japa is of four kinds:

(i) *Baikhri* or oral one, performed by tongue.

(ii) *Madhma* or one done mentally at the seat of the *Shakti* in the *Kanth* or throat.

(iii) *Pashianti*. This too is a mental *sadhan*, but done at the seat of the heart.

(iv) *Para*. It is also a mental process but is performed with attention riveted at the seat of the navel.

All these types of Japas do give solace of varying degrees and one gets peace of mind of a temporary nature because the various bodily ganglions involved in them are of a lower order, situated below *Shiv-Netra* or the Third Eye.

Besides these, there is Simran or Japa of the indescribable and hidden Sound-current that proceeds of itself from the depths of the Great Silence. It is technically termed '*Para-Vidya*' (knowledge of the Beyond) or '*Dhun-Atmak Shabd*.' In this type of Japa, one has just to listen to the all pervading Naam or Shabd. As this Sound cannot be expressed in any symbolic form, it is expressionless. It may be contacted above the sensory plane, behind the centre of the two eye-brows. The true significance of Naam, the Creator of various planes and divisions of the endless universes may be known by one who is an adept in the

Surat-Shabd-Yoga or has united his soul with the Sound-principle.

"He who performs Japa with the tongue of thought, knows the true nature of the Sound-current (Word or Naam)."

—Malar M.I

No doubt *Dhun-Atmak Shabd* is the very essence of one's soul, but one cannot apprehend it without the help and guidance of a Master-soul or Adept in the line, and without Surat-Shabd Yoga, i.e. establishing a contact of the spirit or soul with the essentially live-principle (through a regular process of inversion or self-analysis). One does not get life's richest gift; for the spirit is engaged all the time in outer pursuits by constant association with the mind and the senses, revelling in the enjoyment of the world and worldly objects. Emerson, the great American philosopher, speaks of inversion as 'tapping inside'.

Lord Jesus metaphorically speaks of it : "Knock and it shall be opened unto thee."

Naam or Name is *Varn-Atmak*, while Naami or Named is the Great Power behind the descriptive words and is *Dhun-Atmak*. From epithetic words, one has to recede to the Power which the words denote and stand for. The Japa or *Varan-Atmak* is performed orally by the tongue and is just a preparatory course in the spiritual discipline of the soul. Sant Ravi Das speaks in this context as,—

"Without actual sight (of an object) longing does not arise,
Whatever is visible to the naked eyes is perishable indeed,
He who establishes an inner contact (of *Surat* and *Shabd*) of Spirit and Sound, through the help of *Varn-Atmak* words, is a true Yogi, desireless and free."

—Bhairon Ravi Das

Varn-Atmak or epithetic names look just like dolls apparently dancing by themselves; but they in fact are being made to dance by invisible hands controlling the lines behind them. In exactly the same way there exist infallible links between Naam and the Nami (or the Names and the Named: *Varn-Atmak* and *Dhun-Atmak Shabds*). *Varn-Atmak* words pave the way to *Dhun-Atmak Shabd* and are thus essential aids in stilling the mind of oscillations, purging it of all impurities and rendering it capable of apprehending the *Dhun-Atmak* current within, for without this *Elan Vita*, life's vital chords, the spirit cannot transcend the physical plane (of the body) and traverse into the higher spiritual planes leading to the Home of our Father. The *Varn-Atmak* words may and do differ because of lingual differences but the *Dhun-Atmak Shabd* being the Life-principle of the spirit or soul is the same throughout. It has indeed been an Unspoken Language and

an Unwritten Law unto itself throughout the ages and it shall remain so till eternity; for all life is one and one only for the entire creation, though it is in multitudinous forms. The teachings of the saints which centre round the One Reality, are, therefore, a common heritage for the entire humanity and not for this or that class or social order or religious sect. They are secular in their outlook and not sectarian. Children of Light as they are, they give light to one and all irrespective of castes and creeds. God made man (an embodied spirit) and man made religions and is caught in his own handiwork just like a silk worm in his cocoon. The saints come to liberate man from his own self-made bondage, take him out of the narrow grooves in which through centuries of habitual way of living he has moulded himself to fit in his own self-made cocoon. The saints do not meddle with social orders nor do they create any more. Their Clarion Call is addressed to the spirit alone. They come with a Divine Mandate:

"To lead man from darkness to Light, from Untruth to Truth, from Death to Immortality".

and exhort,—

"Arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached." —Veda

This is why Christ declared,—

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets...I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." —Matt 5 : 17-19

Again,—

"For them (saints) there is no difference between the so-called twice-born : the Brahmins, Kshatriya and the Vaishas and the low-born Sudras for they address them all alike,

The beloved of the Master (Gurmukh) worships the Naam and attains *Moksha* (liberation)—the Naam, which O Nanak ! equally pervades in all. —Suhi M.5

In the life story of Guru Nanak, we come across the anecdote of Mian Mitha, a Fakir of Mithankot, a town in the Punjab (now in West Pakistan). In his wanderings, Guru Nanak came across this fakir and inter-alia told him that without Naam or Word, one found no peace here and hereafter and could not escape from the Karmic bondage. As to what this Naam or Word was, he said, that it was not a subject of comprehension by the senses, but one could apprehend it on a Super-sensual plane. The Guru asked Mian Mitha to listen within himself, but the Mian could hear nothing. Thereupon the Guru took him aside and looking intently at him asked him once again to attune himself within, whereupon the Mian exclaimed that he could distinctly feel the Vibrations of Naam, in every pore of his body. This shows that the

'Word of God' cannot be described in so many words and is characterised by vital vibrations, which can only be felt and realised but cannot be known.

"A beloved of the Master feels and experiences the quickening of life-impulse in all the pores of his body. —Ramkali M.1

The saints, therefore, in common, say that God is one and there is only one way that leads Godwards. The spiritual discipline, does not interfere with one's nationality, nor with one's social religion. Every person, whatsoever his nationality or religion, can practice this discipline and successfully follow the Path of the saints. The Divine Link of Word is already present in each individual, no matter who he is and whatever his avocation in life. It is a process of self-analysis and inversion and one who practices it, can get hold of this Life-saving line. But the trouble is that everyone clings to the age-old convictions and is not prepared to break away from them and accept ideas which appear new and novel. But by constant association with a God-man or a man of realisation, the Light of Truth gradually dawns upon him and in course of time he begins to realise the Truth.

Naam is involution of the Sound-Principle:

Naam is characterised by a sweet and a serene Sound-current. This ethereal Music is

going on in each individual. In fact, there is no place without it. Its Divine notes can, however, be heard through the grace of some Master of divine music or Master-soul. All the scriptures of the world make pertinent references to this heavenly Harmony.

"God manifested Himself as Naam—the ever-reverberating Naam,
The Vedas, Shastras and Smritis sing of Naam, times without number. —Gauri M.5

"The Naam (Sound-principle) reverberating as It is in all hearts, does not diminish or increase and is unchanging permanence,
Without Naam all are just paupers and this Truth comes only from a Master-mind."
—Sarang M.1

"Hearing the Naam one becomes the knower of the 'self', and gets all that is good and noble,
Hearing the Naam all sins drop off of themselves and one easily gets at the Truth,
O Nanak! by hearing the Naam, one's face shines with glory,
The beloved of the Master is ever in contact with the Naam." —Sarang War M.1

"Then the Eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the Ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the Lame man leap as an hart, and the Tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." —Isiah 35:5-6

"For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

—Corinthians 13-12

Seat of Naam or word :

The body is the temple of God, for God made man after His own image. But it is only after the spirit, through the process of inversion, gets concentrated between and behind the two eye-brows that one can hear the Divine melody. Guru Nanak, when questioned by the Yogins (those engaged in yogic exercises like *Prancyam* etc.) about this music, told them :

"O Yogi, you may have the gift of the Divine-link only if you could transcend the body.

—Ramkali M.3

This Divine-link is essentially musical in character and has a great magnetic force, which, pulls the Spirit upwards to the spiritual realms, as Spirit, Word and God are of the same essence. When like attracts like, the Spirit is irresistibly drawn out of the bodily raiment. Maulana Rumi, therefore says :

"if I were to give thee a little account of the divine strains, all the spirits will leave their respective bodily abodes."

Christ too speaks of it :

"When the dead shall hear the 'Voice of God', they that hear shall live."

This heavenly Harmony is already within each one of us, and one can distinctly hear it

if one could by leaving the outgoing faculties through repetition of certain name or names withdraw the spirit from the sensory plane. The reverberations of this music make one self-absorbed, and self-intoxicated.

"One dyed in the Naam is ever absorbed within and gets eternal bliss." —Ramkali M.1

All the intoxicants of the world produce but a passing inebriation and a momentary forgetfulness; but a spirit dyed in the colour of Naam or Word is ever-engrossed in the Sound-principle arising from the Deep Silence of the Soul and experiences an everlasting bliss, which is interminable:

"The intoxication of the Naam, O Nanak, works round the clock." —Nanak

Naam is the Life-principle that works through all that lives and its withdrawal means disintegration, dissolution and death:

"I actually live when I listen to Naam's music and I simply die when I forget it."

—Asa M.1

Again,—

"O my Beloved, I do live when I contact with the Naam,
Without that there is no life, my Master has instilled this in me." —Sri Rag M.4

So long as this inner contact of the spirit with the Naam which is latent in each one of us is not established, there is no way out for the spirit and it gets no peace.

Time for practicing spiritual disciplines:

One may devote oneself to the worship of Naam or Word at any time and at any place for there are no restrictions in this behalf. But *Amrat-Vela* (early dawn) is the most appropriate and fruitful for the purpose.

"At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn ;
Be ye in communion with the divine Word,
And meditate on His glory." —Jap Ji 2

Again,—

"O thou rise early, and worship the Word, day and night and then O Nanak, thou shalt have no grief and escape from all troubles."

—Gauri M.4

Why is Naam inaudible ?

Our mind is ever in a state of oscillation. It is covered over with the dust of ages upon ages. All the time our mental faculties are flowing outwards into the world, and never for a moment have known any rest. Until the mind is purified and stilled, one cannot listen to the reverberations of the Sound-current.

"There can be no devotion with an unclean mind, for one cannot have an access to the Sound-current,
A man dwelling on the plane of the senses, dies in the senses and loses all respect here and hereafter." —Sri Rag M.3

Again,

"Oscillating between this and that on account of egoistic life, the mind gets lost and finds

neither charm nor feels any interest in the Sound-current." —Sarang M.3

Naam is a subjective experience:

Naam in the real sense is beyond perception, comprehension and apprehension. It is an unspoken language and mutely it speaks. Madam Blavatsky calls it the 'Voice of Silence.' A continual touch with the Word, helps in stilling the mental vibrations and quietening the mind. Guru Nanak speaks of It :

"Naam cannot be seen with the eyes, nor can it be comprehended, but with all this, it is so sweet and so loving,

O God ! grant Nanak this ambrosial nectar from age to age, so that he may ever be engaged in its limitless vibrations." —Maru M.1

Real Naam: Incomprehensible and hidden:

The real essence of Naam is all-pervading in each individual and is yet hidden and unfelt. It can be made manifest through the grace of a Master-soul, established in the Naam or in other words is Naam-personified and capable of transmitting to others his own life-impulse (the Naam).

"In the present age, the unmanifested Naam reigns supreme, and is surging in abundance in each individual,

It however, becomes manifest in such hearts, as take refuge at the lotus feet of a Master-soul." —Parbhati M.3

In this world, one can have each and every thing one may desire; but the unmanifested Word is too difficult to be achieved. It is the heritage of one who is a Gurmukh or established in the Master-soul.

"Hari Naam is a very rare commodity,
It may grow in the heart of some Guru-man."

—Sorath War M.3

"The whole world is devoid of Naam,
Yet It may be found from a Guru-man."

—Gujri M.3

Naam: Divine link between man and his maker:

The controlling power of Naam has within its mighty grasp the endless series of universes. Human body too has been designed on the model of Cosmic Order. This microcosm made up of diverse elements, likewise, owes its integrity and organic unity to Naam or Harmony as the poets have often put it. It is the indissoluble link between God and man. Just as a fish can ride a mighty wave, so a spirit can ride the Sound-current and reach the Sea of Sound or Naam. The Path of Sound-principle is known as a process of inversion. But for this Path, all other paths lead to extentionalism, with no way-out of the Grand and Mighty Panorama of life.

"Whoever gets linked with Naam, he alone, O Nanak, can realise the Immaculately Pure."

—Gauri M.5

The Path of Naam leads to Sahaj State:

Naam helps a spirit in the attainment of Sahaj—a state of perfect equipoise beyond the realm of three *Gunas*: (*Satwik, Rajasik* and *Tamasik, i.e.* Equanimity, Action and Inaction or Inertia respectively). It is a state not subject to decay and disintegration.

"Let the Beloved of Nanak have mercy on him
for Naam is the blind man's staff unto him."
—Bilawal M.5

Again,—

"O God ! Thy Name is a pilgrim's staff to the blind,
To me who is a poor and helpless wretch,
Thy name is my prop and support."
—Tilang Nam Dev

Naam: The most efficacious Sadhan or Discipline in the present age:

Whenever vice predominates and virtue gets underground and good acts are altogether ignored, the saints preach the spiritual sadhan or practice of Naam, for it is the easiest and the quickest remedy. In this age, all individual and social acts and the performance of rites and rituals as enjoined by the scriptures are hardly of any substantial use for they are outmoded and out of time.

"In this age, '*Kirtan*' (the Sound-principle) occupies the highest place (amongst spiritual practices). —Maru M.5

Sant Ravi Das testifies to this as,—

"In *Satyuga* (the golden age) 'Sat' or Truth reigned supreme; in '*Treta*' (the silver age) sacrificial oblations had had their day; in '*Dwaper*' (the copper age) idol worship was the law of the land; but in '*Kalyuga*' (the iron age), Naam is the most potent and sovereign remedy." —Gauri Ravi Das

Swami Tulsi Das ji, also concurs in the above dictum,—

"Meditation (on the Sat) prevailed in the first unit of time, Yajnas or sacrifices in the second, Bhaktī or loving devotion in the third and now in the fourth when evil is in ascendent and the mind is wholly engrossed in evil like a fish in the sea, Naam or discipline of the spirit works as the 'Saving Life Line' from the ocean of delusive matter."

Again,—

"In Kalyuga, Naam is the only precious thing, for with the help of Naam, the devotees are saved." —Maru M.4

"In this Kalyuga, all *Sadhans* or practices are of no avail except that of Naam, for it alone is a potent remedy.." —Sar Bachan

Guru Arjan too speaks of it as,

"In Kalyuga, Naam is the only means of salvation." —Bhairon M.5

Again,—

"Now that Kalyuga has set in, it is the most appropriate season for sowing the seed of Naam,

Nothing else can bear fruit now, do not be in any delusion on this account." —Basant M.5

"Nanak would gladly make an offering of himself to one who has been linked with Naam."

—Kanra M.5

Naam : The saving factor in all the four ages :

The Path of the Naam is the most ancient and the most natural. It is in consonance with the Divine Law. In all the four ages, it has acted as a saving Life-Line for the people. During the last five hundred years, saints like Kabir Sahib, Guru Nanak and the other nine Gurus, Dadu Sahib, Paltu Sahib, Tulsi Sahib, Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, Baba Jaimal Singh and Baba Sawan Singh have been the great exponents of this Path. The Muslim divines have been practicing and preaching the Path of *Kalma* for fourteen hundred years or more. The Prophet Mohammed, Shamas Tabrez, Maulana Rumi, Hafiz Sahib, Moinuddin Chisti and others taught this very thing. Again two thousand years ago, John the Baptist and Christ laid down the Path of the Word or Naam. Zoroaster long before preached of 'Sarosha' or the Sound-current in Persia. Lord Buddha, two thousand years ago, practiced this very *Sadhan*. The teachings of Gorakh Nath, long before Buddha, centred round this cardinal principle. If we go as far back as four thousand years, we find that in Egypt it was known as the 'Path of Aston' which was

preached by King Akhniton. In the Upnishadas as well we get references of 'Udgit' or the 'Harmony' of the Beyond.' Lord Krishna, long before, was fully conversant with this science. In Vedas, the oldest scriptures of the world, we read in Wak Devi Sukat of 'Nad' or Music' and 'Sruti' or that which is heard.

Kabir Sahib tells us that he came in all the four Yugas and every time he preached of Naam or Word. In each Yuga, he was known differently as Sat Sukrat, Munindar, Karunamae and lastly as Kabir.

Sikh scriptures testify in plain words that during the four Grand Divisions of time, people benefited by the practice of Naam by sitting at the feet of saints:

"In all the four ages, Naam occupied the predominant position and people meditated on the Shabd. In this age, Guru-man alone is saved."

—Gauri M.3

"Whosoever benefited, he did so through Naam, obtained by the grace and the blessings of some Gurmukh (Master-soul)."

—Bhairon M.3

"Naam alone has been the Saving Life Line through the ages." —Sohla M.3

Evidence from various religions :

If we go through the scriptures of various religions, we find clear references to the basic common factor, viz. the Sound-current as the

only means for creation and maintenance of the universe and the regeneration of mankind. A few quotations are given below which will convince the reader of the truth of it.

Hinduism : According to the Hindu theological books, the whole creation was made through *Nad*. They also, refer to it as *'Akash Bani'* (voice coming down from the Heavens). We have references of It even in the Vedas, the ancient scriptures of the world. We read of It in the Upnishads as for instance, the 'Nad Bind' Upnishad which deals with the matter in a very lucid manner. The Hath Yog Pradipaka also speaks of this Sound-principle.

"He has taken the support of the Word, *i.e.* melodious tune. —Chandogya Upnishad

"Let Yogi sit on *Sidh Asan* and while practising the *Vaisnavi Mudra,* should hear the sound through his right ear."

—Nad Bind Upnishad

"By communion with the Word, he will become deaf to the external sounds, and will attain the *Turia Pad* or a state of equipoise within a fortnight." —Nad Bind Upnishad

"First the murmurring sounds resembling those of the waves of the ocean, the fall of rain and the running rivulets and the Bheri will be heard intermingled with the sounds of bell and conch, etc. —Nad Bind Upnishad

Now as to Light-principle :

"Though He is beyond speech and mind, yet one can experience and realise Him by going beyond speech and mind."

—Brahm Upnishad

"He is the Immutable, the Supreme and the Self-luminous,
And knowing Him one transcends death ; there is no other way to freedom...
He is to be realised in the cave that shines."

—Kaivalya Upnishad 8-9 B

Tejabind Upnishad conceives the Supreme *Atman* dwelling in the heart of man, as the most subtle centre of effulgence, revealed only to yogins by Super-sensuous meditation.

Now about the effulgent point: It has its excellent meditation, super-mundane, seated in the heart (attainable by) the *Anava, Shakta* and *Shambhava* (methods) ; the meditation is gross, subtle, as well as that which is transcendental.

It is the most difficult but the only process of Supreme Realisation: Even to the wise and the thoughtful this meditation is difficult to perform, and difficult to attain, difficult to cognise and difficult to abide in, and difficult to cross.

"The seeker must therefore be one determined to make that which is inaccessible accessible, and one whose sole aim is to serve the Guru and His Cause only—the worship of the Supreme Spirit." —Tejabind Upnishad 1, 2, & 4

Futility of Scriptures: After studying the Vedas, the intelligent one solely intent on acquiring knowledge and realisation, should discard the Vedas altogether as the man who seeks to obtain rice discards the husk.

"Like the butter hidden in milk, the Pure Conciousness resides in every being. That ought to be constantly churned out by the churning rod of the mind.

—Amritbind Upnishad : 18 & 20

Then there occur, in the Upnishads, terms like '*Trilochan*' and '*Tryambaka*' evidently referring to the one having three eyes—the third eye being the *Single Eye* of Christ or *Divya Chakshu* or the eye that is self-luminous.

Gosain Tulsi Das ji, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana, speaks of it as :

"The nails of the Master's feet are more lustrous than the shining crest jewel. A concentration on them opens the inner vision and one becomes all-knowing."

Zoroastrianism : The essence of the Avestic teachings is to be found in the prayers to the various cults of life as taught by Zoroaster, the Master of life, who lived about several thousand years ago. Edmond Szekely, speaking of these cults, tells us of the last two cults, as follows,—

(i) *The Cult of the Light of Life :* The next cult in the Avestas is the cult of Humanity, or, as the Zend text expresses it,

the cult of the 'Light of Life'. What does this stand for? This Light, declares Zoroaster, comes to us continually from the most distant ages, making it possible for us to possess the total wisdom and experience of previous generations, without the need to try again for ourselves what they have already tried and proved right in the course of thousands of years. For Zoroaster, the greatest fault we can be guilty of, is to neglect this 'Light of Life' and to limit it to only a few rays instead of absorbing it in its fullness through observance of the cult which bears its name. Most of the passages concerning the cult of the 'Light of Life' are to be found in the book of the Avestas entitled 'Vispered', which is the exact Zend equivalent of our word 'Omniscience'.

(ii) *The Cult of Eternal Life:* The ninth and last cult in the Avestas is the cult of the Stars—the cult of 'Eternal Life'. This cult became the one most widely known in antiquity, and most of the passages mentioning Zoroastrianism in the works of the classical Greek authors are concerned with it. According to Zoroaster, life is not the exclusive privilege of this planet; there are innumerable planets

and solar systems in infinite cosmic space where life exists in a wide range of forms. Zoroaster teaches that life is a form of cosmic energy which will always appear wherever favourable preconditions exist. Life is a cosmic function, an inherent quality of the universe, and there is in boundless space and time a universal solidarity connecting all forms of life on whatever planet. Certain planets or solar systems may disappear or appear, and the life of them likewise, but life itself appearing and disappearing on eternally changing planets and solar systems is as eternal as the universe. And man is a part of this eternal life—of this universal cosmic ocean formed by the sum total of all forms of life on all the planets. The most beautiful hymns in the the Avestas are to be found in the part devoted to the cult of 'Eternal Life.'

The Avestac term for the principle of life is 'Sarosha' (the angel of inspiration). In Zend Avesta, we have an invocation to Mazda praying for the gift of Sarosha for those whom He loves.

Mr. M. H. Toot, a great scholar of comparative religions, in his book, *Practical Metaphysics of Zoroastrians*, tells us that in *"Gatha Ushtavaiti"*, Ratu Zoroaster, thus proclaimed :

"Thus I reveal the Word which the most unfolded One has taught me,
The Word which is the best for mortals to listen.
Whosoever shall render obedience and steadfast attention unto Me, will obtain for one's own self the All-embracing Whole Being and Immortality;
And through the service of the Holy Divine Spirit
Will realise *Mazda Ahura* [i.e., godhead]
—Ha, 45-8

Again the same scholar quotes elsewhere in an as yet unpublished work, the following passages from *Ahunavaiti Yasna*:—

"Divine Guidance of the Eternal Master,
Accomplishing long life in the Right Paths leading to the Absolute Kingdom of the Divine Mind,
Wherein the Omniscient, Self-existent Life-Giver dwells by His all-pervading Reality,
I cause to invoke that divine *Sarosha* (i.e., the Word) which is the greatest of all divine gifts for spiritual succour." —Ha, 33-35

"The Creative Verbum:
Assimilating one's unfolding self with His all-pervading Reality
The Omniscient, Self-existent Life-Giver has framed this mystic Verbum and its melodious rhythm,

With the Divine Order of personal self-sacrifice for the Universe, unto the self-sublimating souls,

Which is that person who with the Enlightened Superb Mind can give both these (Mystic Verbum and Divine Order) through His gracious mouth unto the mortals."

—Ha, 29-7

Buddhism

A. *Extracts from "The Path of Sudden Attainment" by Hui Hai (a scripture of Mahayana Buddhism) translated by John Blofeld.*

Nature of Perception: The faculty of perception is continuous, so perception takes place whether objects are present or not. Thus we know, it is the objects themselves that come and go and not the faculty of perception. It is the same with all the senses.

Nature of Hearing: It is not the question of whether there is sound or not. Because the faculty of hearing is continuous, so hearing takes place whether there is sound or not. It is the real nature of the 'Self' as knower, that perceives and hears independently of the objects and sounds respectively and apart from the sense organs.

Method of Enlightenment by sudden apprehension:

Its purpose is to reach a state where thought is absent. Its scope lies in not allowing yourself

to be moved by any form of allurement. Its nature is stillness and its activating agent is wisdom.

Wisdom: Four kinds:

(i) The five kinds of perception produce the 'Wisdom of self-perception or self perfection.' It consists in being able to use all the forces of perception without being thereby caused to believe in the plurality of form.

(ii) Aprehension produces the 'Wisdom of profound discernment or observation.' It consists in being able to enter into the sphere of all forms of perception and to be proficient in making distinctions between them without allowing disorderly thoughts to arise and thus achieving freedcm frcm illusion.

(iii) Discrimination produces *'Universal Wisdom'*. It consists in being able to regard every single atom without feeling love and hatred and implies the voidness of distinction.

(iv) Next comes the basis of all perception which produces the 'Perfect All-reflecting Buddha wisdom'. It is Absolute Void and Stillness, Perfect and *Unwavering Brilliance.*

B. *Spiritual Experiences of Highest Bodhisattvas—Extracts taken from Surangama Sutra—A Buddhist Bible edited by Dwight Goddard: (Published by Dutton & Co.)*

...Thereupon, the Blessed Lord revealed to the the assembled highest *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas*

and great *Arhats* free from all intoxicants, this most sacred teaching. He said:—

Honoured *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas* and great *Arhats*! You have now been under my instruction for a long time and have attained to perfect emancipation. As an introduction to what I am about to say, I want to enquire of each of you as to how you attained *Samadhi*. When you began to realise in the early stages of your devotion and practice, the falseness of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects by the sense organs*, which one of the spheres first became throughly enlightend, by means of which you attained to Samadhi?

...Then Maha-Kasyapa with the Bhikshuni Suvarna and other nuns of his spiritual family, rose from their seats and bowed down to the Lord Buddha saying: Blessed Lord! In previous *Kalpas* when Buddha Kandrasuryapradipa was living, I served him faithfully and listened to his teaching and practiced it faithfully. After he

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*The eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects by the sense organs are as follows, in the case of sight.

(a) Organ of Sight.

(b) Object of Sight.

(c) Consciousness of sight, which results from the contact of the organ of sight with the object.

Hence, a, b and c in regard with all the six senses (Cognition—Sight—Hearing—Smell—Taste and Touch)add upto 18.

passed into *Nirvana*, I continued to make offerings to his sacred relics and kept his image freshly gilded, so that his teaching, like a lamp, continued to illumine my life by its brightness. By my faithful reverence for his relics and his image, my mind was illumined by a purple-golden brightness that reflected itself in all my following lives and became a permanent purple-golden brightness with my body.

Then Sariputra rose from his seat and bowing down before the Lord Buddha, said : Blessed Lord ! Since many *Kalpas*, as many as the sands of the Ganges, my mind has continued its purity and because of it, there have been many pure rebirths. As soon as my eyes perceived the differences in the ever-flowing process of changes, both in this world and in the Way of Emancipation, my mind immediately understood them and, because of it, I acquired the attainment of perfect freedom. When I was on the road one day, I met the brother Kasyapa who kindly explained the principle of the Lord's teaching that everything rose from causes and conditions and, therefore, was empty and transitory, and I realised the infinitude of Pure Mind Essence. From that time, I followed my Lord and my perception of mental sight became transcendental and perfectly enlightened, so that I instantly acquired an attaintment of great fearlessness and confidence. Because of it I attained to the

degree of *Arhat* and became, in fact, the first Prince of my Lord Buddha, begotten by the Lord's true words and nourished and transformed by his intrinsic *Dharma*. In reply to my Lord's enquiry as to our first experience of attainment, I would answer that my first thorough accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense-organs, was by reason of the transcendent brightness within my own mind whose shining beams illuminated my intelligence and reached as far as my insight could penetrate.....

Then Samantabhadra rose from his seat and bowing down to the Lord said: I became a Prince of my Lord's *Dharma* many long *Kalpas* ago, and all of the innumerable *Tathagatas* of the ten quarters of the universe, taught their disciples, who had the qualifications for becoming *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas*, to practice the devotion of Samantabhadra's unceasing compassion for all sentient beings for his name's sake. The transcendental and intrinsic hearing of my Essential Mind became very pure and transparent, so that I could use it to discriminate the understanding and ideas of all sentient beings. Should there be any sentient beings in whatever quarter of the universe—past, present or future—to develop the devotion of Samantabhadra's unceasing compassion within his mind, I would become aware of its vibrations through

the transcendental sensitiveness of my hearing and I would thereupon ride to them on the mysterious elephant of six tusks, in a hundred thousand different manifestations of my likeness, at the same time, to attend upon them each in his own place. Whatever might be his hindrances, however deep or serious, able to appreciate my presence or not, I would be near him to lay my hand upon his head, to give him encouragement and support, peacefulness and comfort, so that he might accomplish his supreme attainment. As my Lord has enquired of us as to our first attainment of accommodating our eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with sense-objects through our sense organs, I would say that in my case it was through the intrinsic hearing of my Essential Mind and its spontaneous understanding and response.

Then Purna Metaluniputra rose from his seat and bowed down to the feet of the Lord Buddha, saying : Blessed Lord ! For an infinity of *Kalpas* I have had great freedom in preaching the *Dharmas* of emptiness and suffering and because of it have realised my own Essence of Mind. In the course of my preaching, I have interpreted profoundly and wonderfully the many *Dharma* Doors, with great confidence and with no feeling of fear, everywhere and before great assemblies. Because of my eloquence, my Lord has encouraged me to make use of it in propagating the

Dharma by means of the wheel of my voice. Since these ancient days, since the Lord has been among us, I have offered my services in turning the *Dharma* wheel, and have lately attained to the degree of *Arhat* by means of the development of my hearing by reason of which I am conscious of the transcendental Sound of the *Dharma*, reverberating like the roar of a lion. Consequently, my Lord has honoured me by regarding me as the greatest preacher of his Mysterious *Dharma*.

As my Lord has enquired of us which was our earliest accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through sense organs, I would answer that my first thorough accommodation of mentation was the subjugation of my internal attachments and enemies and the extermination of all intoxicants by means of the intrinsic Sound of the Mysterious *Dharma*.

Then the great Maudgalyayana rose from his seat and bowed to the Lord Buddha, saying: Blessed Lord! When I was begging on the road, I met the three Kasyapa brothers who taught me the Lord Tathagata's profound principle of causes and conditions. I was greatly influenced by the teaching and very soon acquired and realised particularly clear intelligence. My Lord was so kind as to bestow on me the true robe for my true body, my beard and head were

shaved and I became a follower of my Lord. Since then my transcendental powers have become wonderfully developed, I have made visits to all the ten quarters of the universe, without hindrance by space, passing instantly from one Buddha-land to another without being conscious of how it was done. I thus attained the degree of *Arhat* and was accounted by all and by my Lord Tathagata as being highest among the disciples in perfect enlightenment, great purity of mind, spontaneity and fearlessness in manifestation of transcendental powers.

As my Lord has enquired of us which was our most perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense organs, I would answer that my first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation was my mind becoming abstracted in tranquil reflection that mysteriously developed its enlightening brightness, as if my mind that had been a muddy stream had suddenly become clear and transparent like a crystal ball.

6. Then the *Bodhisattva-Mahasattva* Akshobya rose from his seat and bowed to the feet of the Lord-Buddha, saying: Blessed Lord ! My Lord Tathagata and I had already acquired a transcendental body of infinitude at the time, long ago during the advent of the Buddha Camatha-prabasha. At that time, I had in possession four

precious pearls having the transcendental penetrating power of the Element of Fire, by reason of which everything was luminously clear to my intuitive insight, even to the farthermost Buddha lands of the most remote Universe. In the light of these magic pearls everything became as empty and transparent as pure space. Moreover, within my mind, there manifested a great mirror that was marvellously self-illuminating that radiated ten kinds of wonderful, glorious, far-reaching as the infinitude of all-embracing space. In this marvellous mirror were reflected all the royal continents of the Blessed, and like the mingling of different coloured-lights, merged with my body into pure brightness and clarity of infinite space, there being no hindrance to their entrance or passing. By this magical power, I was able to enter into all the Buddha lands and engage in all their Buddha-services of adoration with great ease and perfect accommodation. This transcendental power was due to my deep intuitive insight into the source of the Four Great Elements, by reason of which I was able to see that they were nothing but the appearing and disappearing of false imaginations, which were intrinsically as empty as pure space and with no more differentiation as pure space. And I realised that all the innumerable Buddha-lands within and without the mind were of the same inconceivable purity. From this intuitive

insight I consequently acquired the *Samadhi* of perseverance of non-rebirth.

As my Lord has enquired of us which was our most thorough accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense organs, I would answer that in my case it was through my perfect intuitive insight into the infinity of open space as illumined by the Element of Fire, and by that power I attained to the highest *Samadhi* and the transcendental power of *Samapatti*.

7. Then the Prince of the Lord's *Dharma*, Vejuria, rose from his seat and bowed down to the feet of the Lord Buddha and said: Blessed Lord ! I recall that many, many *Kalpas* ago there appeared in the world a Buddha called Amitayus, teaching all *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas* the intuitive and essential nature of the wonderful Essence of Mind, and urging them to concentrate their minds on the essential sameness of *Samsara* World, and all sentient beings in it, that they were all alike manifestations of the Element of Wind (or Ether) and its rythmic-vibrations revealing and manifesting all else. In my practice of *Dhyana*, I concentrated on this and reflected on how the great world was upheld in space, on how the great world was kept in perpetual motion, on how my body was kept in motion, moving and standing, on the rythmic vibration of its life established and maintained

by breathing, upon the movement of the mind, thoughts risings and passing. I reflected upon these various things and marvelled at their great sameness without any difference save in the rate of vibration. I realised that the nature of these vibrations had neither any source for their coming nor destination for their going, and that all sentient beings, as numerous as the infinitessimal particles of dust in the vast spaces, were each in his own way topsy-turvy balanced vibrations, and that each and every one was obsessed with the illusion that he was a unique creation. All sentient beings, in all the three thousand Great *Chillicosms*, are obsessed with this hallucination. They are like innumerable mosquitos shut up in a vessel and buzzing about in wildest confusion. Sometimes, they are roused to madness and pandemonium by the narrow limits of their confinement. After meeting my Lord Buddha, I attained to a state of intuitive realisation and non-rebirth perseverance, whereupon my mind became enlightened and I was able to view the Buddha land of Immovability in the Eastern Heavens, which is the Pure Land of Buddha Amitayus. I was acknowledged as a Prince of the Lord's *Dharma* and vowed to serve all Buddhas everywhere, and because of my enlightenment and great vow my body and mind became perfectly rhythmic and alive and sparkling, mingling with all other

vibrations without hindrance to its perfect freedom.

As my Lord has enquired of us as to which was our first thoroughly perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense-organs, I will say that in my case it was through my intuitive insight into the nature of the Element of Ether, and how by its balanced and rhythmic vibrations everything was embraced in perfect purity in the Enlightening Mind, and how concentrating my mind upon it I attained *Samadhi* and in that *Samadhi* I realised the perfect oneness of all the Buddhas in the purity of the Wonderful Mind Essence, that is the Bliss-body of Buddhahood...

8. Then *Bodhisattva-Mahasattva* Maitreya rose from his seat and bowing down to the Lord Buddha said: Blessed Lord! I recall that many, many *Kalpas* ago there was a Buddha appeared in this world called Chandra-surya-pradipa-prabasha whom I followed as his disciple. At the time I was inclined to the worldly life and liked to associate with the nobility. The Lord Buddha, noticing it, instructed me to Practice meditation, concentrating my mind on its consciousness. I followed his instructions and attained *Samadhi*. Since then I have served numberless other Buddhas using this same method, and by it have now discarded all desire

for worldly pleasures. By the time Buddha Dipankara appeared in the world, gradually I had attained to the supreme, wonderful, perfect *Samadhi* or Transcendental Consciousness. By this highest *Samadhi* I was conscious of infinite space, and realised that all of the Tathagata-lands whether pure or impure, existent or non-existent were nothing but the manifestation of my own mind. My Lord! Because of my perfect realisation that all such skillful devices of the *Tathagatas* were nothing but evolvements of my own mental consciousness, the essential nature of my consciousness flowed out in innumerable manifestations of *Tathagatas,* and I came to be selected as the next Coming Buddha, after my Lord Shakyamuni Buddha...

As my Lord has enquired of us as to our first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense organs, I answer that my first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation was by my perfect realisation that all the ten quarters of the universes were nothing but activities of of my own consciousness. It was by that that my consciousness became perfectly enlightened and that the limits of my mind dissolved until it embraced all Reality forsaking all prejudices of conditional and unconditional assertions and denials, I acquired perfect non-birth preseverance...

9. Then Maha-sthama-prapta, Prince of the Lord's *Dharma*, rose from his seat and bowed down to the feet of the Lord Buddha, together with the fifty-two members of his Brotherhood of *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas*, and said: Blessed Lord! I recall that in a past *Kalpa* long ago, as many *Kalpas* ago as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, there appeared in this world a Buddha, called Amitabha-prabhasa Buddha, whose Buddha-land was in the Eastern Heavens. In that *Kalpa* there were twelve *Tathagatas* followed each other in close succession, the last one being called Buddha-Chandra-surya-gomin, who taught me to practice meditation upon the name of Amitabha, saying: *'Namo Amitabha-Buddhaya'*. The value of this practice lay in this. So long as one practices his own method and another practices a different method, they balance off each other and meeting, it is just the same as not meeting. Whereas, if two persons practice the same method, their mindfulness would become deepes and deeper, and they would remember each other and develop affinities for each other life after life. It is the same with those who practice concentration on the name of Amitabha—they develop within their minds Amitabha's spirit of compassion toward all sentient life. Moreover, whoever recites the name of Amitabha Buddha, whether in the present time or in the future

time, will surely see the Buddha Amitabha and never become separated from him. By reason of that association, just as one associating with a maker of perfumes becomes permeated with the same perfumes, so he will become perfumed by Amitabha's compassion, and will become enlightened without any other expedient means.

Blessed Lord! My devotion to reciting the name of Amitabha had no other purpose than to return to my original nature of purity and by it I attained to the state of non-rebirth perseverance. Now in this life, I have vowed to teach my disciples to concentrate their minds by means of reciting the name of Amitabha (*Namo-Amitabha-Buddha*) and also I teach them to wish to be born in his Land of Purity and to make that their only Refuge.

As my Lord has asked us which is our first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through sense organs, I answer that my first perfect accommodation of the eighteen spheres of mentation was that I recognised no separation or differences among my six senses, but merged them into one transcendental sense from which arises the purity of Transcendental Wisdom, by reason of which I attained highest *Samadhi* and the graces of *Samapatti*.

Then the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Avalokiteshvara rose from his seat and bowing down

to the Lord Buddha said : Blessed Lord ! I recall that ages ago, as numerous as the sands of the river Ganges, that there was present in the world a Buddha, called Avalokiteshvara by whose instruction I was encouraged to begin seeking enlightenment. I was taught to begin practicing by concentrating my mind on the true nature of 'Transcendental Hearing', and by that practice I attained *Samadhi*. As soon as I had advanced to the stage of Entering the Stream, I determined to discard all thoughts discriminating as to where I was or had been. Later I discarded the conception of advancing altogether, and the thought of either activity or quietness in this connection did not again arise in my mind. Continuing my practice, I gradually advanced until all discrimination of the hearing nature of my selfhood and of the Intrinsic Transcendental Hearing was discarded. As there ceased to be any grasping in my mind for the attainment of Intrinsic Hearing, the conception of enlightenment and enlightened nature were all absent from my mind. When this state of perfect 'Emptiness of Mind' was attained, all arbitrary conceptions of attaining to Emptiness of Mind and of enlightened nature, were discarded. As soon as all arbitrary conceptions of rising and disappearing of thoughts were completely discarded, the state of *Nirvana* was clearly realised. Then all of a sudden, my

mind became transcendental to both celestial and terrestrial world, and there was nothing in all the ten quarters but empty space, and in that state I acquired two wonderful transcendencies. The first was a 'Transcendental Consciousness' that my mind was in perfect conformity with the Essential, Mysterious Enlightening Mind, of all the Buddhas in all the ten quarters, and also it was in like perfect conformity with the Great Heart of Compassion of all the Buddhas. The second transcendency was that my mind was in perfect conformity with the minds of all sentient beings of the six Realms and felt with them the same earnestness and longing for deliverance.

Blessed Lord! Because of my adoration for that Buddha Avalokiteshvara, he taught me how to attain the *'Diamond Samadhi'* by the single method of concentrating my mind upon 'Transcendental Hearing'. And moreover, he helped me to attain the same compassionate capacity that all the *Tathagatas* had, by reason of which I attained the thirty-two kinds of transformations that are instantaneously available in response to the prayers for deliverance from any part of the world at any time.

These transformations have all been attained and exercised with perfect freedom and spontaneity in the mysterious *Diamond Samadhi* which I attained by concentrating my mind in

the practice of *Dhyana* on the nature of Transcendental Hearing.

Blessed Lord ! I have also, because of the mysterious powers that accompany the *Diamond Samadhi*, and because of my being in perfect conformity and with the same earnestness and longing for deliverance with all sentient beings, in the six Realms of all the ten quarters of all the universes, past, present and future, been able to bestow upon all sentient beings the same Fourteen kinds of Fearlessness, which animate my own mind...

As my attainment to the original nature of perfect accommodation is wonderfully developed from the hearing organ to include all the sense organs and discriminating mind, my body and mind profoundly and mysteriously embrace all the phenomenal world, so that if any disciple should recite my name, his blessing and merit would be like and equal to that of any Prince of the Lord's Dharma, whether he uses the same name or some other name. Blessed Lord ! The reason why their merit is like and equal for one to recite my name, and for another to recite some other name, is because of my practice of *Dhyana* by which I acquired the True and Perfect Accommodation.

Blessed Lord ! This is what is meant by the Fourteen kinds of Fearlessness of Powers of Deliverance which bring blessing to all sentient

beings. But in addition to the acquirement of perfect accommodation by means of my attainment of Supreme Enlightenment, I have also acquired another Four Kinds of inconceivable, wonderful Transcendencies of Spontaneity.

The First is as it is because when I first attained to my Transcendental Hearing, my mind became abstracted into its essential nature, and all the natural powers of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching and understanding attained to a state of pure, glorious, enlightenment of perfect mutuality and accommodation in one perfect unity of Awareness. Because of this, I have acquired this great Transcendental Freedom, so that when I give deliverance to sentient beings, I can transform myself into wonderful appearances, and besides I can utter innumerable, mysterious, *Dharanis*...

Sometimes I appear in a form of kindness, or in a form of justice, or in a state of concentration, or in a state of intelligence. But in all I do it for the sake of deliverance and protecting of sentient beings so that they might acquire a like Great Freedom.

The Second inconceivable, wonderful Transcendency of Spontaneity is as it is, because of my emancipation of hearing and thinking from the contaminations of the six sense-objects. It is as if sound were passing through walls without any hindrance. Thus I can skilfully transform

into different kinds of appearances and recite different *Dharanis*, and can transform these appearances and recitation of *Dharanis*, to give the Transcendental Power of Fearlessness to sentient beings. Thus in all the countries of the ten quarters, I am known as the Giver of Transcendental Power of Fearlessness.

The Third inconceivable, wonderful Transcendency of Spontaneity is as it is, because of my practice upon the pure, original Essence of perfect accommodation, so that wherever I go, I lead sentient beings to willingness to sacrifice their lives and valuable possessions in order to pray for my compassion and mercy.

The Fourth inconceivable, wonderful Transcendency of Spontaneity is as it is, because of my acquirement of the Buddha's Intrinsic Mind and because of my attainment of the supremacy so that I can give all different kinds of offerings to all of the *Tathagatas* of all the ten quarters of the universes.

As my Lord has enquired of us as to what was our first perfect accommodation, of the eighteen spheres of mentation in contact with objects through the sense organs, I answer that my first perfect accommodation was, when I attained to the state of perfectly accommodating reflection of *Samadhi* by means of my Intrinsic Hearing and Tranacendental Mental Freedom from objective contaminations, so that my

mind became abstracted and absorbed into the Divine Stream, and thus acquired the Diamond *Samadhi* and attained Enlightenment.

Blessed Lord ! In those far off days, my Lord, the Buddha Avalokiteshvara, praised me for my skilful, acquirement of the all-accommodating Door of Dharma, and in one of his great Assemblies, he announced that I, too, should be called Avalokiteshvara, "The hearer and answerer of Prayer", the Bodhisattva of Tenderest Compassion. As such, my Transcendental Hearing reaches to the ten quarters of all the universes, and the name of Avalokiteshvara prevails over all the extremes of human suffering and danger.

Manjusri's Summation:

Thereupon, the blessed Lord, sitting upon his throne in the midst of the *Tathagatas* and highest *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas* from all the Buddha-lands, manifested his Transcendent Glory surpassing them all. From his hands and feet and body radiated supernal beams of light that rested upon the crowns of each *Tathagata, Bodhisattva-Mahasattva,* and Prince of the *Dharma,* in all the ten quarters of the universes, went forth rays of glorious brightness that converged upon the crown of the Lord Buddha and upon the crowns of all the *Tathagatas, Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas* and *Arhats* present in the assembly. At the same time all the trees of the Jeta Park, and all the waves lapping on the shores of its

lakes, were singing the music of the *Dharma*, and all the intersecting rays of brightness were like a net of splendour set with jewels and over-arching them all. Such a marvellous sight had never been imagined and held them all in silence and awe. Uuwittingly, they passed into the blissful peace of the Diamond *Samadhi* and upon them all, there fell like a gentle rain, the soft petals of many different coloured lotus blossoms—blue and crimson, yellow and white—all blending together and being reflected into the open space of heaven in all the tints of the spectrum. Moreover, all the differentiations of mountains and seas and rivers and forests of the *Saha World* blended into one another and faded away leaving only the flower-adorned unity of the Primal Cosmos, not dead and inert but alive with rhythmic life and light, vibrant with transcendental sounds of songs and rhymes, melodiously rising and falling and merging and then fading away into silence.

Then the Lord Tathagata addressed Manjusri, Prince of the *Dharma*, saying: Manjusri ! you have now heard that these *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas* of greatest and highest attainments have testified regarding the expedient means that were involved, and the results seen in spiritual graces and powers of *Samapatti*, that followed in their devout lives and practices. Each one stated that the beginning was seen in the perfect

accommodation of some one mental sphere in contact with its sense object, and from that followed the perfect accommodation of all the spheres of mentation and the attainment of *Samadhi, Samapatti* and the perfect awareness of their Intuitive and Essencial Mind. So we see that their devout practices, inspite of their variations, all eventuated in the same good result irrespective of their attainments and the times involved.

I want Ananda to fully understand and realise these different attainments of Enlightenment and note which of them is adapted to him. And I wish, also, that after my *Nirvana,* as future disciples of this world wish to attain highest *Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi,* that from these experiences they may know which door of expedient means appears to each most easily entered.

Having listened to the Blessed Lord, Manjusri, Prince of the Lord's *Dharma,* rose from his seat, bowed dowd to the Lord Buddha, and sobered by the influence of the Lord's profound dignity, uttered the following stanza :

The keeping of the Precepts is a necessary part of the practice of *Dhyana,* but the novice cannot depend upon them alone to bring him to the nature of perfect accommodation...

Then Manjusri addressed the Lord Buddha, saying : Blessed Lord ! Since my Lord has descended from the *Deva* Realms to this *Saha*

World, he has helped us most by his wonderful Enlightening Teaching. At first we receive this Teaching through our sense of hearing, but when we are fully able to realise it, it becomes ours through a Transcendental and Intuitive Hearing. This makes the awakening and perfecting of a Transcendental Faculty of Hearing of very great importance to every novice. As the wish to attain *Samadhi* deepens in the mind of any disciple, he can most surely attain it by means of his Transcendental Organ of Hearing.

For many a *Kalpa*—as numerous as the particles of sand in the river Ganges—Avalokiteshvara Buddha, the hearer and answerer of prayer, has visited all the Buddha-lands of the ten quarters of the universe and has acquired Transcendental Powers of Boundless Freedom and Fearlessness and has vowed to emancipate all sentient beings from their bondage and suffering. How sweetly mysterious is the Transcendental Sound of Avalokiteshvara ! It is the pure Brahman Sound. *It is the subdued murmur of the sea-tide setting inward.* Its mysterious Sound brings liberation and peace to all sentient beings who in their distress are calling for aid ; it brings a sense of permanency to those who are truly seeking the attainment of *Nirvana*'s Peace...

While I am addressing My Lord Tathagata, he is hearing at the same time, the Transcendental Sound of Avalokiteshvara. It is just as

though, while we are in the quiet selection of our *Dhyana* practice, there should come to our ears the *sound of the beating of drums.* If our minds, hearing the sound, are undisturbed and tranquil, this is the nature of perfect accommodation.

The body develops feeling by coming in contact with something, and the sight of eyes is hindered by the opaqueness of objects, and similarly with the sense of smell and of taste, but it is different with the discriminating mind. Thoughts are arising and mingling and passing. At the same time it is conscious of sounds in the next room and sounds that have come from far away. The other senses are not so refined as the sense of hearing ; the nature of hearing is the true reality of Passability.

The essence of sound is felt in both motion and silence, it passes from existent to non-existent. When there is no sound, it is said that there is no hearing, but that does not mean that hearing has lost its preparedness. Indeed, when there is no sound, hearing is most alert, and when there is sound the hearing nature is least developed. If any disciple can be freed from these two illusions of appearing and disappearing, that is, from death and rebirth, he has attained the true reality of Permanency.

Even in dreams all thinking has become quiescent, the hearing nature is still alert. It

is like a mirror of enlightenment that is transcendental of the thinking mind because it is beyond the consciousness sphere of both body and mind. In this *Saha world*, 'the Doctrine of *Intrinsic, Transcendental Sound*', may be spread abroad, but sentient beings as a class remain ignorant and indifferent of their own Intrinsic Hearing. They respond only to phenomenal sounds and are disturbed by both musical and discordant sounds.

Not withstanding Ananda's wonderful memory, he was not able to avoid falling into evil way. He has been adrift on a merciless sea. But if he will only turn his mind away from the drifting current of thoughts, he may soon recover the sober wiseness of Essential Mind. *Ananda ! Listen to me* ! I have ever relied upon the teaching of the Lord Buddha to bring me to the *indescribable Dharma Sound of the Diamond Samadhi*. Ananda ! You have sought the secret lore from all the Buddha-lands without first attaining emancipation from the desires and intoxications of your own contaminations and attachments, with the result that you have stored in your memory a vast accumulation of wordly knowledge and built up a tower of faults and mistakes.

You have learned the Teachings by listening to the words of the Lord Buddha and then committing them to memory. Why do you not

learn from your own self by listening to *'Sound of the Intrinsic Dharma'* within your mind and then practicing reflection upon it ? The perception of Transcendental Hearing is not developed by any natural process under the control of your own volition. Sometime when you are reflecting upon your Transcendental Hearing a chance sound suddenly claims your attention and your mind sets it apart and discriminates it and is disturbed thereby. As soon as you can ignore the phenomenal sound, the notion of Transcendental Sound ceases and you will realise your Intrinsic Hearing.

As soon as this one sense perception of hearing is returned to its originality and you clearly understand its falsity, then the mind instantly understands the falsity of all sense perceptions and is at once emancipated from the bondage of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking, for they are all alike illusive and delusive visions of unreality and all the three great realms of existence are seen to be what they truly are, imaginary blossoms in the air.

As soon as the deceiving perception of hearing is emancipated, then all objective phenomena disappears and your Intuitive Mind-Essence becomes perfectly pure. As soon as you have attained to this Supreme Purity of Mind-Essence, its Intrinsic Brightness will shine out spontaneously and in all directions and, as

soon as you are sitting in tranquil *Dhyana*, the mind will be in perfect conformity with Pure Space.

Ananda! As soon as you return to the phenomenal world, it will seem like a vision in a dream. And you experience with the maiden Pchiti will seem like a dream, and your own body will lose its solidity and permanency. It will seem as though every human being, male and female, was simply a manifestation by some skilful magician of a manikin all of whose activities were under his control. Or each human being will seem like an automatic machine that once started goes on by itself, but as soon as the automatic machine loses its motive power, all its activities not only cease, but their very existence disappears.

So it is with the six sense organs, which are fundamentally dependent upon one unifying and enlightening spirit, but which by ignorance have become divided into six semi-independant compositions and conformities. Should one organ become emancipated and return to its originality, so closely are they united in their fundamental originality, that all the organs would cease their activities also. And all worldly impurities will be purified by a single thought and you will attain to the wonderful purity of perfect Enlightenment. Should there remain some minute contamination of ignorance, you

should practice the more earnestly until you attain to perfect Enlightenment, that is, to the Enlightenment of a *Tathagata*.

All *the Brothers in this Great Assembly, and you too Ananda, should reverse your outward perception of hearing and listen inwardly for the perfectly unified and intrinsic sound of your own Mind-Essence,* for as soon as you have attained perfect accommodation, you will have attained to Supreme Enlightenment.

This is the only way to Nirvana, and it has been followed by all the Tathagatas of the past. Moreover, it is for all the *Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas* of the present and for all in the future if they are to hope for perfect Enlightenment. Not only did Avalokiteshvara attain perfect Enlightenment *in long ages past by this Golden Way,* but in the present, I also, am one of them.

My Lord enquired of us as to what expedient means each one of us had employed to follow this Noble Path to *Nirvana.* I bear testimony that the *means employed by* Avalokiteshvara *is the most expedient means for all,* since all other means must be supported and guided by the Lord Buddha's Transcendental Powers. Though one forsake all his worldly engagements, yet he cannot always be practicing by these various means; they are especial means suitable *for junior and senior disciples, but for laymen, this common method of concentrating the mind on the*

sense of hearing, turning it inward by this Door of Dharma to hear the Transcendental Sound of this Essential Mind, is most feasible and wise.

Oh Blessed Lord ! I am bowing down before my Lord Tathagata's Intrinsic Womb, which is immaculate and ineffable in its perfect freedom from all contaminations and taints, and am praying my Lord to extend his boundless compassion *for the sake of all future disciples,* so that *I may continue to teach Ananda and all sentient beings of the present kalpa, to have faith in this wonderful Door of Dharma to the Intrinsic Hearing of his own Mind-Essence,* so surely to be attained by this most expedient means. If any disciple should take this Intuitive Means for concentrating his mind in *Dhyana* Practice on this organ of Transcendental Hearing, all other sense organs would soon come into perfect harmony with it, and thus, by this single means of Intrinsic Hearing, he would attain perfect accommodation of his True and Essential Mind.

Importance of Keeping the Precepts :

Then Ananda and all the great assembly were purified in body and mind. They acquired a profound understanding and a clear insight into the nature of the Lord Buddha's Enlightenment and experience of Highest *Samadhi.* They had confidence like a man who was about to set forth on a most important business to a far off country, because they knew the route to go and

return. All the disciples in this great assembly realised their own Essence of Mind and proposed, henceforth to live remote from all worldly entanglements and taints, and to live continuously in the pure brightness of the Eye of *Dharma*.

C. *Extract from 'My Experience in Meditation' by His Holiness The Venerable of Tai Hsu, (Chinese Buddhist Monk) translated by Bhikku Assaji.*

...From this time I discontinued my old routine of meditation; this was from 1908 to 1914. When the European War broke out, I began to doubt Western theory and my own power to save the world with Buddhist teaching. I felt it was a sheer waste of time, if I did any more of what I had done. So I went to "PO-TO" island, where I secluded myself in a monastery to develop further spiritual advancement.

After two or three months of seclusion, one night when I was meditating, my mind became calmer, I heard the sound of a bell from a neighbouring temple. It seems that my chain of thoughts was broken by that sound and I sank into a state of something like a trance, without knowing anything until early next dawn, when I heard the sound of the matin bell and I regained my sense of knowing. At first, I only felt that a light melted into me. There was no distinction of self and other things and of what was inside and what was outside.

After this experience, I continued my life of reading *sutras*, writing books and meditating, for about one year, and after that one year, I chiefly engaged myself in studying the books of the Vijnnana School. I especially paid attention to the Records od Wei Shi (Vijnnana). Here I once more experienced another trance-like state. I was reading for several times repeatedly a certain paragraph of the said Records, explaining that both conditional things and the Truth are devoid of the substance of Self. I entered the trance-like meditation. This time it was different from the former two ; I perceived in it that all things which exist on conditions had their deep and subtle order, minutely arranged, without the slightest confusion.

This kind of comprehension I can produce now whenever I desire.

The third experience showed me the truth of cause and effect, which appear to be so on account of our consciousness. It is true, the law of cause and effect has its natural way without disorder.

After each of these three experiences, there was some change physically and mentally, and I also happened to have some presage of '*divyachaksus*' (clairvoyance), '*divya-srota*' (clair-audience) and '*parachitta-jnana*' (thought reading).

If the six supernatural powers are possible, then the theory of *Karma* and *Rebirth*, which is

based on the demonstration of clairvoyance and *'purvanivasan Usmritijnana'* (knowledge of all former existences of self and others) is also believable.

Christianity

St. John's Gospel begins with the memorable words :

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."
—John 1 : 1-3

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us (and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of Grace and Truth." —John 1 : 14-1

"Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven." —Psalms 119 : 89

"Upholding all things by the Word of his Power." —Herbrews 1 : 3

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of God shall stand forever."
—Hebrews 1 : 3

"For the Word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and interests of the heart."
—Hebrews 4 : 12

"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made...For He spake and it was done."
—Psalms 33 : 6-9

"The Word of God liveth and abideth forever."
—Proverbs, 18 : 10

' The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower ; the righteous runneth into it and is safe."
—Proverbs 18 : 10

"And they were astonished at his doctrine for his Word was with power." —Luke 4 : 32

"Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you,
The spirit of Truth proceedeth from the Father
Sanctify them through Truth—Thy Word is Truth." —John C-15

"Now the parable is this : The seed is the Word of God." —Luke 8 : 1

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentence, but he that cometh after me, mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." —John 3 : 4

"Those whom the eternal Word speaks are delivered from uncertainty. From one Word proceed all things and all things tell of Him."
—Imitations of Christ

"And I looked, and lo, a lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders, and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth."

—Rev. 14: 1-3

"His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength...

He that hath ear let him hear what the spirit saith...

To him that ever cometh, I give to eat of the tree of life..." —Rev. I & II

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." —Psalm 119: 105

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

—Peter 1: 23

"The sower soweth the Word." —Mark 3: 13

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but is passed from death unto life." —John 5: 24

"The Spirit of Truth, is come, and He will guide you into All Truth." —John 16: 13

"I have manifested Thy Name unto the men."

—John 17 : 6

"I have given them Thy Word."

—John 17 : 14

"Receive with meekness the ongrafted Word, which is able to save your souls."

—James General Epistle 1 : 21

"The Word of God endureth forever."

—1 Peter Ep. General 1 : 25

"Love the Word better than the world."

—Imitation of Christ

"All scripture is given by Inspiration of God."

—Timothy

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." —John 1 : 14, 1

"The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so everywhere born of the spirit."

—Luke 8 : 1

Spiritual experience of Eliphas Levi a Catholic Priest.

...A particular phenomenon occurs when the brain is overcharged by Astral Light ; sight is turned inward instead of outward ; night falls on the external and real world, while fantastic brilliance shines on the world of dreams ; even the physical eyes experience a slight quivering and turn up inside the lids. The soul then

perceives by means of images the reflection of its impressions and thoughts. This is to say that the analogy subsisting between idea and form attracts in the Astral Light of reflection representing that form, configuration being the essence of the vital light; it is the universal imagination, of which each of us appropriates a lesser or greater part according to our grade of sensibility and memory. Therein is the source of all apparitions, all extraordinary visions and all ths intuitive phenomena peculiar to ecstasy.

The appropriation or assimilation of the light by clairvoyant sensibility is one of the greatest phenomena which can be studied by science. It may be understood in a day to come that seeing is actually speaking and that, 'the consciousness of light is a twilight of eternal life in being.' The Word of God Himself, who creates light, and is uttered by all intelligence that conceives of forms and seeks to visualise them. "Let there be light". Light in the mode of brightness exists only for eyes which look thereon, and a soul enamoured with the pageant of universal beauty, and fixing its attention on that luminous script of the endless book which is called things manifest, seems to cry on its own part, as God at the dawn of the first day, the sublime and creative words: *Fiat lux*...

...To understand the cause of this force, but never to be obssessed and never overcome thereby, is to trample on the serpent's head. In such secrets are contained all mysteries of magnetism, which name can indeed be applied to the whole part of antique Transcendental Power. Magnetism is the wand of miracles, but it is this for initiates only; for rash and uninstructed people, who would sport with it or make it subserve their passions, it is as dangerous as that consuming glory which, according to the allegorical fable, destroyed the too ambitious Semele in the embraces of Jupiter.

One of the great benefits of magnetism is that it demonstrates by incontestable facts the spirituality, unity and immortality of the soul; and these things once made certain, God is manifested to all intelligences and all hearts. Thereafter, from the belief in God and from the harmonies of creation we are led to that great religious harmony...

...It follows from this revelation of the ancient world that clairvoyant *extasis* is a voluntary and immediate application of the soul to the universal fire, or rather to that light—abounding in images—which radiates, which speaks and circulates about all objects and every sphere of the universe. This application is operated by the persistence of will liberated from the senses and fortified by a succession of

tests. Herein consisted the beginning in the light, the adept became a seer or prophet; then having established communication between this light and his own will, he learned to direct the former, even as the head of an arrow is set in a certain direction. He communicated at his pleasure either strife or peace to the soul of others; he established intercourse at a distance with those fellow-adepts who were his peers, and, in fine, he availed himself of that force which is represented by the celestial lion. Herein lies the meaning of those great Assyrian figures which hold vanquished lions in their arms. The 'Astral Light' is otherwise represented by gigantic sphinxes having the bodies of lions and the heads of Magi. Considered as an instrument, the Astral Light is that golden sword of Mithra used in his immolation of the bull. And it is the arrow of Pheoebus which pierced the serpent Python...

The Astral Light is a whole, that element of electricity and of lightening, can be placed at the disposition of human will. What must be done, however, to acquire this formidable power? Zoroaster has just told us; we must know those mysterious laws of equilibrium which subjugate the very powers of evil by sacred trials, must have conquered the phantoms of hallucination and taken hold bodily of the light, imitating Jacob in his struggle with the angel.

We must have vanquished those fantastic dogs which howl in the world of Oracle, we must have heard the light speak. We are then its masters and can direct it, as Numa did, against the enemies of the Holy Mysteries. But in the absence of perfect purity, and if under the government of some animal passion, by which we are still subjected to the fatalities of tempestuous life, we proceed to this kind of work, the fire which we kindle will consume ourselves; we shall fall victims to the serpent which we unloose and shall Perish like Tullus Hostilius...

Pythagoras defined God as a living and absolute Truth clothed in light; he defined the Word as number manifested by form; and he derived all things from the Tetractys—that is to say, the tetrad. He said also that God is supreme music; the nature of which is harmony.

It is related furthermore that beasts were obedient to Pythagoras. Once in the middle of the Olympic Games, he signalled to an eagle winging its way through heaven; the bird descended, wheeling circle-wise, and again took rapid flight at the master's token of dismissal. There was also a great bear ravaging in Apulia; Pythagoras brought it to his feet and told it to leave the country. It disappeared accordingly, and when asked to what knowledge he owed such a marvelious power, he answered: "To

the science of light." Animated beings are, in fact, incarnations of light. Out of the darkness of ugliness forms emerge and move progressively towards the splendours of beauty instincts are in correspondence with forms; and man, who is the synthesis of that light whereof animals may be termed the analysis, is created to command them. It has come about, however, that in place of ruling as their master, he has become their persecutor and destroyer, so that they fear and have rebelled against him. In the presence of an exceptional will which is at once benevolent and directing, they are completely magnetised, and a host of modern phenomena both can and should enable to understand the possibility of miracles like those of Pythagoras...

The Astral Light is the living soul of the earth, a material and fatal soul, controlled in its productions and movements by the eternal laws of equilibrium... This light, which environs and permeates all bodies, can also suspend their weight and make them revolve about a powerfully absorbent centre...

Islam:

Among the Muslim Sufis, it is known as *Sultan-ul-azkar,* (the king of prayers). Another order of Sufis call it *Saut-i-Sarmadi,* (the Divine Song). They also call it *Kalam-i-qadim* the ancient sound), and the *Kalma* or 'Word', *Nida-i-Asmani* (the sound coming down from

heavens). The fourteen *Tabaqs* (regions) were made by the *Kalma*—the Word.

Khawaja Hafiz, a great divine, says :

"From the turret of the Heaven, a call bids thee Home,
But fallen into the snares thou listeneth not,
No one knows where the Mansion of the Beloved lies,
But sure enough, the chiming of the bells proceeds therefrom."

Again,—

"Take the stop-cock from thy ears, and hear thou the voice of emancipation coming to thee,
Attach not to the material world,
The elixir of life is showering from above.
The beat of love while sounding in the Heavens,
Sends blessings to the souls of the devotees."

Maulana Rumi, in his Masnavi, says :

"Grow not sceptical, but attune thyself to the sound coming down from the Heavens,
Thy soul shall have revelations from afar.
What these are ? the glimpses of the Unrevealed ; were I to speak of these sweet melodies,
Even the dead shall rise from their graves."

Again,—

"Rise above the horizon, O brave soul, and hear the melodious song coming from the highest heaven."

Prophet Mohammed said that he heard the Voice of God as any other sounds.

Shah Niaz, another Muslim devotee, says:

"Soul is the Will and the Secret of God. Its meditation is carried on without the help of tongue and palate. Alas! thou art stuck fast in the physical bondage and do not hear the Holy Sound of God. My Beloved is speaking to thee all the while, but woe to thee for thou heareth not the Voice."

Again,—

"The whole universe is resounding with the Sound, and thou hast only to open the door of thine ears."

"For opening the ears, it is sufficient to stop hearing the outer sounds. If you do this, you will hear the perpetual and unending Sound It is infinite and has no beginning nor end, and on account of that, It is called *Anhad* (i.e. without any limits). Without this Word—the Eternal Sound—an expression of the Infinite, the world could not have come into existence. Hold communion with the Melodious Sound and lose yourself in It, O' wise man."

"O God! show me that place from where the Kalma (Sound Principle) proceedeth without Words."

Teachings of the Masters:

"Without the Word, Sound or Eternal Song, the soul sees not. Where could she go? As

she cannot fathom the mystery of 'Word' she is wandering from place to place."

—Kabir Sahib

"Mind hankereth after evils ; though the Word the Master restraineth it."

—Guru Teg Bahadur

"Through the medium of the Word, soul doth cross the endless ocean of matter. Lowly Nanak, therefore, glorifies His Naam (the Word)." —Ram Kali M.I

"The Word is both earth and ether. These had their being through the Word. This Word expressed Itself in other aspects as well. The whole creation sprang up after the Word. O Nanak, the endless Word is reverberating in each heart."

—Janamsakhi M.I

"The all-pervading Word has attracted all my mind. What else have I to think of? Communion of the soul with the Word creates everlasting Bliss. At-one-ment with the Lord procures the Essence of Joy and Peace." —Sri Rag M.I

"I am emancipated. The God-man has unfettered me. Through the communion of soul with the Word, I have gained the resplendent seat of honour. O Nanak ! the all-pervading Naam or the Word dwelleth in the hearts of all. The company of the Gurumukhs procures communion with it."

—Malar M.I

"Far off, on the other shore, is my Beloved. The God-man's Word, alone carries the soul across. In the company of the saints, man is in a clover and never repents."

—Tukhari M.1

"How can the ignorant get to the principle of union of soul with the Word? Without communion with the Word, soul comes and goes. O Nanak! the Gurumukh who is himself emancipated, meets by the merciful Writ of the Lord." —Maru M.1

"The creation and the ultimate dissolution of the universe is caused through the Word. Again, through the Word, it takes its exisence anew." —Majh M.3

"By good luck, the Lord consort has become ours. The Endless Song (the Word), resounding everywhere, gives a clue of His Court." —Bilawal M.5

"The Word made all the earthly and heavenly systems." —Gauri M.5

"He is the true saint, who talks about the secret of the Divine Word (the Eternal Sound). Having scrutinised the Unknowable and the Unthinkable, He has realised the Bani (the Eternal Sound)." —Tulsi Das

"Word is the lock and Word is the key thereto,
With the chains of the Word, all are bound.
The Lord resideth in the form of the Word,

I bow my head at His Feet " —Doolan Sahib

"Ever since I heard the limitless Divine Song (*Anhad*) reverberating throughout,
The *indriyas* (organs) have become tired of going out,
And the mind has shed all its ramifications,
All desires have been satisfied ; like a mad man, I have lost myself in the Word, and obtained complete oneness with It."

—Charan Das

"The Sound of the Word is the prime cause of all. It is also the be-all and the end-all. The three regions and the fourth were made by It. The Word and the spirit are of the same origin and both spring from the essence of the Nameless One. It is, both the cause and the effect, and all were created by it. The Word is the preceptor, as well as, the disciple and is resounding in the heart of everyone. The Word is water and It is the fish, also. Kabir speaks only of this Word. Nanak and Tulsi proclaimed the same Truth. The king and the minister, both are Word personified. Radha Soami (the Lord of the Spirit) says—my brave son, listen to It."

—Swami Shibdayal Singh ji

The Word (Sound) is echoing and re-echoing in the whole of creation. There is no place without It. It is resounding in the living temple of the human body.

The riches of Naam are lasting and inexhaustible :

The treasure-house of Naam is unpickable, and eternally the same; proof against theft, fire and inclemencies of weather :

"While worldly riches come and go, the riches of Naam are eternal and everlasting,
Fire cannot destroy it nor can it be stolen."

—Gujri War M.3

Therefore it is said,—

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal ;
But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal ;
For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." —Matt. 6 : 19-21

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word (Naam) shall not pass away."

—Matt. 24 : 35 Mark 13 : 31

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth but the Word of God shall stand forever."

—Hebrews 1 : 3

"I am possessed of the treasure of Naam,
Whosoever gets it, is emancipated,
It can neither be stolen nor destroyed,
It is-tax free and is not affected by the ravages of time." —Maru M.1

Naam : Eternal and perennial fountainhead :

The fountain of Naam is eternal and perennially full. It springs from *Sant Satgur* (One established in Truth) and becomes manifest in a *Gurmukh* (One who scrupulously follows the teachings of the Guru). He who realises and experiences within him, becomes truly blessed.

"We have the treasure of Naam in abundance,
Satgur transmits his own Life-current,
May he live eternally." —Wadhans War M.4

"Word is an inexhaustible treasure and resides in the heart of a Gurmukh."
—Suhi War M.5

"The riches of Naam never run exhausted and are inestimable,
With the gift of Naam one verily shines bright and becomes the knower of Truth."
—Sorath M.3

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life "
—John 4 : 14

Naam is Truth and a true commodity :

The wealth of Naam is truly great and is surging everywhere :

"Verily, verily the wealth of Naam is truly great,
It is surging full and free within each individual."
—Sri Rag M.1

Naam is Hukam and Shabd :

"He who intunes with the Will of God (controlling Power of Naam) is truly acceptable,
The Master's Shabd gives a clue to and is indicative of the Naam." —Basant M.3

Naam is the heritage of the devotees : Guru is the Treasure-house and Sikh the dealer in this merchandise :

"The devotee's true capital is the treasure of Naam.
This he spends quite freely." —Gauri M.5

"Verily, verily, blessed is the merchant that deals in Naam,
For his disciples buy this commodity and through Shabd cross over the Sea of Life."
—Gauri War M.4

God is truly the king of Naam :

"Hari Naam is thy crest jewel,
Thou hast a monopoly in this respect and Thy disciples trade in it." —Gauri M.5

Naam is the greatest support :

For ensouled bodies, Naam is the only prop. Devotees have a friend in him and are able to get single-minded devotion through the agency of Naam :

"O Nanak ! Naam is the mainstay of the *Jivas*, and without It there is no other support,
Let the universes appear and disappear but one who is devoted to a Gurmukh, remains stead-fast like a rock in the changing panorama of life." —Asa M.4

"The Name of the Lord is a tonic for the mind,
By its use the Pranas and the senses get steady,
Naam is my all in all and everything to me,
He is my constant friend and guide and helps to safely cross over the 'Sea of Life'.

—Todi M.5

"The True Naam is my staff for It helps me always and satiates all my cravings."

—Ramkali M.3

"Listen ye, O saints, says Nanak, and make friends with Naam for It is his only Pole-star."

—Ramkali M.3

"Thy name alone is a great blessing for the world,
For me of course it is a sure support and a sheet-anchor."

—Sri Rag M.1

The spiritual practice : Devotion to Naam :

The correct and accurate method of spiritual *sadhan* is explained by a Master-soul at the time of initiation. The science of Naam is co-eval with creation and the most natural. No human agency has any hand in it. It is an eternal *Kirtan* or Song Celestial, which comes to a person as a free gift from a Master-soul like the free gifts of Nature as water, air, sunshine etc. It involves transmitting of actual life-impulse from one to the other and comes through the grace of the Master. At the initiation, he gives some experience of rising above body consciousness or by opening the inner eye and ear to see the light of God and to hear the Sound-principle.

The spiritual practice is the easiest :

The *Sadhan* of Naam is the easiest and the quickest as it is the most natural. It is to be done with the tongue of thought. Religious beliefs and national feelings do not come in its way. It is *Sahaj Yoga* and everyone irrespective of colour, caste, or creed ; sex or age, profession or avocation can practice it and derive benefit from it. It is an old old wine, but ever fresh, presented in new bottles to suit the needs of the age. In this scientific age it is presented purely as any other science, verifiable as scientific truths with mathematical precision.

"Truth never gets old not it gets rusty."

—Sarang War M.3

It is so natural and so easy that one can take to it as a matter of routine. It involves no intricacies and mysterious practices and one can safely go ahead on the path with ease and comfort. It is a Grand Trunk Road to God. One may with a little labour gather a rich harvest. What the Rishis of old achieved with much labour extending over centuries can now be gained easily with a little of sincere devotion from day to day and that too without any physical penances or thorny and tortuous practices.

To start with one has to take a little care of himself—to devote time regularly at fixed hours in some solitary place. But as soon as inner experience becomes a regular feature with

PACIFIC SCHOOL

the aspirant, then all restrictions as to time and place drop off and one can hear to the Divine Symphony all the day long, even in the midst of most strenuous work without any effort on his part.

"Sleeping or awake, sitting or standing, Kabir remains ever at his post within."

With the *Dhun Atmak* or Inner Sound-current ever reverberating audibly, spirit gets ever absorbed in It. All his worldly acts hereafter become a part of his one interminable *Sadhan.* Always in contact with the light and life of God, one lives in and feels His immanent presence.

Christ similarly used to say,—

"Behold the Lord."

Parmhans Rama Krishna, the saint of Dakhshneshwar, when questioned by Naren (afterwards Swami Vivekanad) if he could see God, unhesitatingly declared,—

"Yes, my child, I see Him as plainly as I see you."

Again,—

"Nanak sees his Lord visibly."

Having once witnessed, face to face, the glory of God within, one becomes ever conscious of His presence. In tune with the Infinite, whatever he does, forms a part of worship. Kabir Sahib gives a beautiful pen-picture of this state,—

"Peerless is the natural form of meditation,
With the grace of the Master, I remain attuned all the time ;

Wherever I go and whatever I do, is all worship,
At home or abroad makes no difference unto me ;
Renouncing all, I listen to the Transcendental Music within,
Awake or asleep and at all hours I am deeply engrossed ;
Why close the eyes, stop the ears or undergo penances ?
When with open eyes I see the Lord in so many forms
This is how Kabir leads his life and he tells this openly to all."

Guru Arjan says in this context :

"Beyond the realm of duality lies the region of eternal bliss,
Lord which cannot be described by all the scriptures,
Nanak visibly sees Him permeating everywhere."

—Asa M.5

Naam : How one gets to It :

(i) Through the pure and simple grace of God.

"Naam would sink deep into the heart of one whom God would like to be blessed with."

—Sri Rag M.3

"He alone gets to Naam, as God may so ordain."

—Kanra M.5

"There is no treasure greater than Naam,
That comes through the grace of God."

—Asa M.3

(ii) Through ordination of God ;

"Such alone get attached with Hari Naam who are so ordained by God ; for they get peace and hear within them, the unceasing Divine Melody". —Ramkali M.3

"Naam means and includes the merit of all *Japas*[a], *Tapas*[b] and orderly living, for without Naam there cannot be purification of the mind,

It is in the fullness of time that one gets hold of the Divine Link of Naam and merges into It." —Sri Rag M.3

"O Nanak ! it is with mighty good fortune that one gets Naam." —Vadhans M 4

"He alone engages in Naam who is so destined." —Asa M.4

(iii) Through the grace of Sant Satguru or one established in or grounded in Naam :

"Through Naam the whole creation came into being,

The experience of ambrosial Naam comes through a Satguru." —Suhi M.3

"Whatever Thou doest that alone is true. The nectarian Naam is bestowed by a Satguru." —Asa M.1

"None but the Satguru is the munificent Lord,
For He gives us the support of Naam." —Shalok M.3

(a) Repetition of mantras or set formulas.

(b) Performance of austerities and penances.

"Worship Naam in full faith and devotion,
O Nanak ! this can be done with the Sadh."
—Gauri M.5

"Virtueless as I am, God has still been merciful,
O Nanak ! Sadh alone can make Naam manifest."
—Gauri M.5

It is only from life that life originates. A living Master and none else can transmit a life-impulse, to others. The sages and the seers have always emphasised that Naam should be made manifest within from who-so-ever it may be possible to do so; and then develop the experience obtained from the competent Master-soul.

"Go where-so-ever thou wilt to get contact with the Divine Link,
And then with the grace of the Guru develop this experience." —Asa M.1

A Muslim Divine says the same thing,—

"Should you like to go on a Haj (pilgrimage to Mecca), take with you a Haji (one who has been to Mecca) for a guide, no matter if he be a Hindu, a Turk, or an Arab.

For an experience of the Divine Link, it is but necessary to contact Sant Satguru, for he alone can explain the theory and grant a practical demonstration of the the Reality within each one of us. The charged words of the Master, his magnetic influence and the life-giving rays emanating from him, quickly help in withdrawal

of the sensory-currents from the body, for unless the spirit surging downwards and rushing headlong into the world through the outgoing faculties is concentrated at its own seat, behind the two eye-brows, it cannot reflect upon itself. It is a practical experience of self analysis or separating the Inner-man (soul or the inner-self) from the Outer-man (Lower-self consisting of mind and matter—material body). By force of age-old habits we are unfortunately clinging to the Outer-man and are revelling all the time in the outer world with which we have identified ourselves. There is a regular process of inversion or receding, call it what we may, tapping inside, as Emerson puts it, or Conversion into a little child, as Christ used to say, and none but an Adept on the Spiritual Path can help in cutting the Gordian Knot and separating the spirit, for a while, from the mind and outgoing faculties. It is in other words a supramental experience of the spirit on a super-sensual plane and can successfully be imparted by some Master-soul. This experiment cannot be praccally performed by reading of scriptures and holy books for they can neither speak nor can explain their true import, nor can be a guide to the spirit as it transcends the physical plane and traverses into higher regions most of which are fraught with subtle dangers and difficulties from which the Master in His luminous form can

protect and lead the spirit safely from plane to plane. Those who take up the way without a a competent Master, are likely to be deceived by the Negative Power and misled. In Surat Shabd Yoga, the importance of the Master cannot be over-emphasised He is in fact the central figure, right from the beginning to the end, in life and after life, helping visibly and invisibly beyond the ends of the earth, right upto the Judgement Seat of God and even beyond.

Naam or the Divine Link is heritage of the Gurmukh :

"All are engaged in the repetition of names,
But one gets to Naam only through the grace of a Master-saint." —Malar M.3

Spirituality can neither be bought nor taught, but may be caught like any infection from a spiritually infected person, a Satguru a Sadh or a Sant. An Adept in spirituality may in compassion and grace, grant a spiritual experience of the saving life-line, now lying buried within each one of us. We have, of course, to develop a receptive attitude and then the grace flows in automatically. The riches of Naam or Word come to a *Gurmukh* and not a *Manmukh,* who, all the time, keeps grovelling on the sensual plane.

"Search within for everything is within,
Only a devotee of the Guru can unearth Naam,

And remain in touch with It all the time.
Inexhaustible as is the treasure of Naam, it comes to one so ordained." —Sri Rag M.3

"Nothing comes upto Naam,
O Nanak ! a rare Gurmukh gets this gift".
(Gauri M.5)

"By communion with the Naam one gets to know the value of the Naam,
By communion with the Naam, one is cleansed of the sins and knows Truth ;
By communion with the Naam, O Nanak, one becomes luminous,
But one gets this communion through the grace of a Guru". —Sarang War M.4

"Escaping bondage one attains salvation and remains absorbed in Truth,
Naam is a rare thing in this world, only a true devotee may get to it,
Nanak would make a sacrifice of himself for one who is devotedly attached to his Guru".
—Sorath War M.3

"A wordly wise knows not the Naam,
And without Naam, loses his respect here and hereafter
He derives not the benefit of Naam,
Engaged as he is in other pursuits",
—Sri Rag M.3

The philosophy of Naam cannot be explained in words. A mere talk on Naam is not helpful at all, for the Naam can only be contacted through an inner experience.

If one were to ask a professor to get us a degree in M.A. against some cash payment, it would hardly be possible. We will have to work for it and qualify for the same. The Power of God is within each one of us, but through the grace of a Master-Soul and some spiritual discpline it can be made manifest and developed. But all creation whatever the source *(Andaj, Jairaj, Setaj, Utbhuj)* and all modes of *Japa* worship *(Baikheri, Madhma, Pashianti* and *Para)*, are far removed from the Naam and are nothing but in a grand delusion.

"All creation and all modes of worship remain in delusion without Naam." —Majh M.3

A contact with this Naam comes only through devotion to a Master soul and not otherwise.

"The Kingdom of God cometh not by observation, The Kingdom of God is within you."
—St. Luke 17:20-21

Be ye the doers of the Word and not the hearers alone, was always the advice of Jesus to his followers.

Human life is a great privilege, for every individual is gifted with an ethereal element in his constitution that gives him the power of discrimination—judging right from wrong and evaluating life's essentials and non-essentials. On this Path two things are absolutely necessary: A true Guide or an Adept traveller of the Path and practice of Naam or spiritual *Sadhan* as

enjoined by that Adept. But one who has not yet freed himself from the world and worldly entanglements cannot achieve anything in this sphere. The Divine Link within us is the very life of our life, yet Its contact comes through the grace of the Master-soul and without an actual experience of the God-head within, all creatures and all *Sadhans* or religious practices are of no consequence whatsoever.

"All creation and all devotion is but a babble and a bauble without the Saving Grace of Naam."

A contact with Naam is possible through the Grace of some living Master, for without his help and guidance one simply cannot have this inner experience of the soul.

"I got Hari-Naam through the compassion of a living Master,
Without a Satguru to help through, one can have no experience of It at all". — Majh M.3

It is, however, extremely difficult to meet a genuine Master of Truth.

"God Himself has ordained that no one can even conceive of Him except through a Satguru".
Majh M.3

Word : Its Merits.

Holy books tell us of the innumerable merits of Naam or Word. Word has been described in the Gospel as the 'Bread of Life' and the 'Water of Life' for it alone quenches the hunger and thirst of the soul.

"Let him that is athirst, come,
And whoever will, let him take the 'Water of Life' freely. —Rev. 22:17

'A healthy mind in a healthy body' is a well known aphorism and both derive their health and vigour from the soul, and if the soul is not provided with an adequate supply of nourishing and appropriate food-stuff, the whole system, physical and mental, is likely to be paralysed. Soul is a Conscious entity in a person and must, therefore, pasture freely on the green and refreshing sward, full of love, life and light, the three essentials of the sea of greater Consciousness.

(i) Naam or Word is the panacea for all ills: *Adhibhautik*; or bodily ailments, like disease, sickness, old age, etc; *Adhi--Devik* or ills coming on of themselves, like accidents, storms and earthquakes, etc. over which a person has no control, and *Adhiatmic* or mental ills, like desires and fascinations of the world, anger, greed and attachments etc.

"Naam is the sovereign remedy for all ills;
It is a Comforter and a Bestower of bliss."
—Gauri M.5

Again it helps as a true guide, both here and hereafter.

"It is a constant companion in both the worlds:
Leave aside all else and be devoted to Naam alone." —Asa M.1

"On the lonesome and dreary path of the soul after death, Naam acts as a Guide and a Comforter." —Gauri M.5

"Oh my tongue! repeat ye the Naam,
Thou shalt be blessed here,
And hereafter thou shalt have comfort."
—Gauri M.5

(ii) Advantages of listening to the Sound-principle of Naam or Word: Guru Nanak, in 8th to 11th stanzas of Jap Ji (a daily prayer of the Sikhs), enumerates many advantages that accrue from hearing and acceptance of Naam.

Stanga 8

"By communion with the Naam, one can attain the status of a *'Sidha'*[a] a *'Pir'*[b] a *'Sura'*[c] or a *'Nath'*[d];

By communion with the Naam, one can understand the mysteries of the earth, the supporting bull and the heavens;

By communion with the Naam, the earthly regions, the heavenly plateau and the nether worlds stand revealed;

By communion with the Naam, one can escape unscathed through the portals of death;

O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstacy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow."

(a) Sidha: A man endowed with supernatural powers.
(b) Pir: A muslim divine or a spiritual teacher.
(c) Sura: gods
(d) Nath: Yogin—an adept in yoga.

Stanza 9

"By communion with the Naam, one can attain the powers of *Siva*, *Brahma* and *Indra* ;

By communion with the Naam, one can win esteem from all, irrespective of one's past ;

By communion with the Naam, one can have Yogic insight, with the mysteries of life and self, all revealed ;

By communion with the Naam, one can acquire the true import of the Sastras, Smritis and the Vedas ;

O Nanak ! His devotees live in perpetual ecstacy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow."

Stanza 10

"By communion with the Naam, one becomes the abode of Truth, contentment and true knowledge ;

By communion with the Naam, one gets the merit of ablution at Sixty-eight[a] pilgrimages ;

By communion with the Naam, one wins the honour of the learned ;

By communion with the Naam, one attains the state of Sahaj[b] ;

(a) Ath-Sath :—Literally means sixty-eight.

The Hindu belief is that ablutions at 68 places of pilgrimage bring purity from all sinful acts.

(b) Sehaj :—This term refers to the state beyond the turmoil of the physical, astral, and causal worlds with all their enchanting Panorama, and where the great Principle of Life is seen within.

O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstacy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow."

Stanza 11

"By communion with the Naam, one becomes the abode of all virtues ;
By communion with the Naam, one becomes a Sheikh, a Pir, and a true spiritual king ;
By communion with the Naam, the spiritually blind find their way to realisation ;
By communion with the Naam, one crosses beyond the limitless ocean of illusive matter ;
O Nanak! His devotees live in perpetual ecstacy, for the Naam washes away all sin and sorrow."

By 'Hearing' or 'Communion', Guru Nanak meant communion with the Naam and nothing else, as would be clear from Sarang War : M.4.

"By hearing the Sound-current, one is truly blessed and riches follow at his heels ;
By hearing the Sound-current, one acquires miraculous powers and all his desires are fulfilled ;
By hearing the Sound-current, one gets fully contented and becomes devoted to Him ;
By hearing the Sound-current, one reaches the Sahaj and finds all comforts ;
By hearing the Sound-current, one knows the Truth and escapes the angel of death ;

By hearing the Sound-current, one becomes self-luminous, and all darkness departs;
By hearing the Sound-current, one becomes the knower of the self and reaps the full benefit of the Naam;
By hearing the Sound-current, one is washed of his sins and meets pure Truth!
O Nanak! by hearing the Sound current, one glows with the Divine Light;
And rare indeed is the elect of the Guru, who comes in contact with the Naam.
By hearing the Sound-current, the mind gets docile and one feels satiated;
By hearing the Sound-current, one feels perfectly contented and is rid of all ills;
By hearing the Sound-current, the Naam becomes fully manifested and one becomes Naam-personified."

When a person, by hearing the Word, arises in full consciousness, he begins to understand the Divine Will and conforms his living to His plan. Hereafter, he has no will of his own, separate from that of his Creator. He now clearly sees the Cosmic Order moving in accordance with God's Plan and he just a part of the centre or hub around which all life revolves. Guru Nanak tells us of this state in stanzas 12 to 15 of Jap Ji Sahib, as,—

Stanza 12

"None can describe the condition of one who has made God's Will his own:

Whoever tries to do so, must realise his folly.
No supply of paper, pen or scribe can ever describe the state of the Conscious Coworker with Divine Plan,
O Great is the Power of the Naam ;
But few there be that know it."

Stanza 13

"By practice of the Naam, one rises into Universal Consciousness and develops right understanding ;
By practice of the Naam, one develops clairvoyance and transvision of the whole creation ;
By practice of the Naam, one is freed from sorrow and suffering ;
By practice of the Naam, one shall not go to *Yama*[a] after his death.
O Great is the Power of the Naam,
But few there be that know it."

Stanza 14

By practice of the Naam, one speeds on to the higher spiritual planes unhindered ;
By practice of the Naam, one gets into the spiritual planes openly and honourably ;
By practice of the Naam, one escapes the by-paths of Yama, the king of death ;
By practice of the Naam, one gets in close touch with the Truth.
O Great is the Power of the Naam,
But few there be that know it."

(a) Yamraj or the Lord of judgment after Death.

Stanza 15

"By practice of the Naam, one finally attains salvation ;

By practice of the Naam, one leads one's kith and kin as well to freedom ;

By practice of the Naam, one saves not only himself but when he becomes an adept, many others whom he guides ;

By practice of the Naam, one freed from desires escapes from the wheel of transmigration.

O Great is the Power of the Naam,

But few there be that know it."

The state in which such persons remain is indescribable, being beyond the limitations of mind and intellect. The Divine contact, when established, makes one the knower of the Divine Plan and the working of the Divine Will. Hereafter he remains unattached and the mind and matter can have no effect on him, and at the time of death, his spirit quits the body as a matter of daily routine, as he has been doing so in life ; and the luminous form of the Guru escorts him on.

In his ascent to spiritual regions, there are no hurdles and no barriers. The magic of Naam works as an 'Open Sesame' to him, enabling him to traverse any spiritual region he may like.

Sikh scriptures tell us,—

"By contact with the Naam, the entire family gains salvation and remains in comfort ;

By contact with the Naam, the entire following gains merit when established therein ;

By contact with the Naam, all the hearers get benefited by repetition thereof ;

By contact with the Naam, all ills vanish and one feels satiated by constant remembrance ;

O Nanak ! they alone get contact with the Naam, who are contacted by a Master-soul.

By contact with the Naam, the mind gets right understanding ;

By contact with the Naam, egotism and lusts fall off ;

By contact with the Naam, the Power of God becomes manifest ;

By contact with the Naam, there comes in peace of Godhead ;

O Nanak ! Naam is a crest-jewel which only a true devotee of the Guru adores."

—Sarang War M.4

"By contact with the Naam, one rises in pure Consciousness and gets absorbed therein ;

By contact with the Naam, one becomes the abode of virtues and feels comforted ;

By contact with the Naam, one escapes all delusions and never gets into troubles ;

By contact with the Naam, one sings true praises of Truth and is washed of all sins."

—Sarang M.4

(iii) The practice in Naam, awakens a person from a long drawn sleep of ages, to

knowledge of the Self and knowledge of God.

"Through the grace of the Master, one gets interested in Naam and is awakened from long slumber of ages." —Gauri M.5

"By listening to Naam, one gets Self-knowledge and reaps the profit of God-knowledge."
—Sarang War M.4

(iv) An absorption in Naam ultimately leads to union of the Soul with the Oversoul, uniting them in indissoluble bonds, the former feeling this close association all the time. He himself is emancipated and so many more to whom he grants the boon of Naam.

"Naam is the abode of all virtues and miraculous powers,
One easily gets to this fountain by devotion to the Lord." —Sawai M.4

"One merged in Naam, lives in the light of God,
The worship of the Divine light comes only through a Master." —Sri Rag M.3

"With Naam in one's heart, all his works shape out of themselves. No more does he depend on the people of the world for God does everything for him and resides with him."
—Gauri M.5

(v) Naam brings in illumination and omniscience. By a contact with Naam, the Light of God dawns in the human soul and one

becomes truly blessed, and attains his lost Godhead :

"The Naam makes manifest the inner light and grants glory,
The Naam brings in beatitude and leads Godwards." —Asa M.3

"Absorption in the Naam brings in Cosmic Awareness,
O Nanak ! those who engage in the Naam are ever blissful." —Ramkali M.1

"By Thy Grace whosoever is given contact with the Naam,
O Nanak ! the Naam leads one to the *Turya* state." —Gauri M.5

(vi) Naam snaps all bondages and grants salvation :

"O Nanak ! whosoever is attached to Naam, the messengers of death cannot come near him." —Bihagra M.4

"By listening to the Naam, ye get near the Truth and the messengers of death do not molest thee." —Sarang War M.4

"He who engages in the practice of the Naam,
Not only he saves himself but he saves many another with him." —Asa M.3

"Naam hath made us fearless,
Naam hath taken us out of the gyres."
—Gond M.5

"O Nanak ! he escapes the fires of hell,
Whose body and mind are saturated with the Naam." —Gauri M.5

"One escapes all bondages and lives in Truth,
The Naam is a rare gift in this age and a Gurmukh (devotee) gets it." —Sorath War M.3

Besides these, a lot of other benefits can be derived from Naam. The mind gets satisfied and is no more swayed by desires. All worldly passions disappear and the poison of the world and worldly objects and relations, has no effect on one devoted to Naam. All his acts and deeds are performed in a spirit of detachment and hence have no longer any binding effect. Established in Truth, he becomes one with Truth and thus attains salvation. devotee of the Naam is always dear to the Master.

"O my friend, Gurmukh, be thou ever engaged in Naam.
By devotion to Naam, thou shalt be blessed, keep it safe within thee ;
Without Naam, one is just a leper, obsessed with blind infatuation,
Fruitless are all his acts and keep him in bondage." —Asa M.4

"So long as thou livest, be thou devoted to Naam,
God escorts those on the Path and He takes them over in the end." —Sri Rag M.4

In Sikh scriptures, we very often come across sincere and earnest prayers for the attainment of Naam :

"Satgur and Satpurush is God-man indeed, and to Him I ever pray,
We worms, tiny and crawling, are yet Thine, O grant us the light of Naam." —Gujri M.4
"We wish for nothing else but the light of Thy Word,
O Master! the light that permeates in all hearts." —Gauri M.5

It is but necessary that we must find out some Master-soul or Adept-in-Naam, who may show us the Saving Life-line wherewith we may be saved and reach the Mansion of the Lord—the Holy City, and regain the Lost Paradise.

"Those who have communed with the Naam, their toils shall end,
And their faces shall flame with glory,
Not only theirs' shall be salvation, O Nanak! but many more shall find freedom with them." —Jap ji

Hari Naam and Ram Naam

Naam is above everything. He is the Creator. There is nothing else besides Him and He is immanent in all things. In the scriptures, Lord-God is often described as Hari. 'Hari' and 'Naam' are practically the same, 'Hari' in action is Naam, and hence Hari Naam, i.e. Naam emanating from Hari. To bring out this aspect of Naam into broad relief and for the proper understanding of it, the term 'Hari Naam' is used in several places in the scriptures.

Again, Naam or the Power of God; call it what you will, is a creative life principle. It is all-pervading and is engaged in the work of creating and sustaining all that is visible and invisible. To bring home the idea of His Omnipresence or ubiquity, He is often described as 'Ram Naam'.

Hari Ras

Now we come to another term 'Hari Ras' or Divine intoxication. Whosoever communes with the Word, Shabd or Naam feels an exhilarating effect, too sweet and too absorbing for words. Far from being inebriating and stupefying it raises one into a state of Super-Consciousness and Universal Awareness. The knowledge of the Word makes everything else known. Once a soul tastes of this sweet elixir, it cannot possibly leave it off, but likes to remain forever in touch with the same.

"Nanak feels in him the intoxication of Naam, all the time."

Christ calls It the 'Water of Life'. The Muslim saints have described It as *'Aab-i-Hayat'* and the Hindus as *'Amrit'* or the water of immortality. It has in It an enlivening effect for It makes the soul live through eternity. It is because of Its life-giving property, that saints talk of It as *'Maha Ras'* or the highest type of *'Ras'*. While other drinks produce morbid sensitivity and cloud the reason and intellect, the nectar of Naam brings one into touch with the Reality, whereby one comes to know the correct values of life :

"There is no real charm on the plane of the senses,
Leave it aside, and drink ye the sweet elixer of life,

Without tasting this nectar one forfeits his human birth and is never really happy."

—Bilawal M.5

"O Nanak! there is great sweetness in Naam, Ye get to the Truth through a competent Master." —Gauri M.2

"O Lord! grant me the sweet elixir of Naam."

—Suhi M.5

Hari Ras: What It is?

Hari Ras is the same thing as Naam or Anhad Bani. A touch with the Hari Ras is touch with God. Those who do not get a contact with Hari Ras, are really unfortunate beings, and can never escape from the sway and the realm of *Kaal* or Death:

"How unfortunate they be who do not get Hari Ras and are ever in the clutches of Death."

—Gujri M.4

"Hari purifies the sinners,
A disciplined soul gives contact with Hari Naam,
And then one tastes the sweet elixir of life."

—Jaitsri M.4

"Know ye of the Unending-song through the Word of the Master,
And enjoy ye the Hari Naam and the Hari Ras so sweet,
O Nanak! God Himself grants this contact for He is both the Cause and the Effect."

—Ramkali M.3

"By tasting the Hari Ras, ye know the Reality,

O Nanak ! those who commune with the Naam,
they alone live." —Basant M.3

It is a long story and an unending tale :

"Whomsoever He uplifts, He offers this drink,
Then do they know the unending tale of His."
—Gauri M.5

"Whomsoever the Merciful One shows mercy,
He gives the boon of the interminable story,
One gets the Hari Ras through the saints and
feels its exhilarating influence in his body
and mind." —Sarang M.4

It is Amrit (The Water of Immortality) :

"By devotion to the Master, one beholds the
Lord,
And getting the Water of Life one tastes the
Essence of God." —Bilawal M.1

"A rare soul gets to this elixir of life,
Whosoever drinks of it, escapes death."
—Gauri M.5

Hari Ras : Where It Is ?

In the sacred books of the various religions, the Vedas, the Smritis, and others, much praise has been bestowed on the Naam or Hari Ras. Water, water everywhere ! but you have not a speck of it. You can see and taste its sweet elixir, if you could but invert. It is the Water of Life, which is found in the temple of the body and we can get to it by recession and withdrawal from the sensory plane. Emerson, the great American philosopher, advises to 'Tap inside.'

Though this enlivening spirit current pervades everywhere, yet we cannot see It until we develop our *Divya-Chakshu*, the inner eye or the single-eye as Christ puts it. For developing the inner vision, we have to go inside and this is why the sages and the seers always tell us 'to invert' into the chamber of the mind. By reading of the scriptures, we may develop a love for the science of the soul but cannot know its practical working nor do we have a taste of it.

"The study of the Vedas cannot give Hari Ras,
Entangled in mind and matter, one talks and talks,
The ignorant abide in darkness ever,
The devotee of the Master, knows the Truth and sings of Him." —Majh M.3

Hari Ras is All-Pervading:

Naam is ever rich in its fullness everywhere, in all the regions, high and low. Its sweet strains also reverberate on all sides. But the unfortunate can have no access to It.

"Hari Ras is all-pervasive but the unfortunate cannot have a taste of It." Sri Rag M.4

Hari Ras is in the Temple of the Body:

"When the light of His feet abides in the heart,
One tastes of the Hari Ras." —Sorath M 5

"Break through the bondage of delusion,
Then shalt thou see the wonder of wonders and drink the nectar." —Maru M.1

Hari Ras is in 'Dasum Dwar' :

When a soul rises above the nine portals of the body and transcends the body consciousness, then it tastes this elixir :

"The body is the temple of God,
You can deal in the commodity of Hari Ras."
—Kalyan M.4

"Nine are the portals of the body and all end in a *cul-de-sac* with no way to real happiness,
The tenth alone, however, leads to a delectable plane where one may partake of the Water of Life.
Grant me, Thou the Merciful One, the gift of the Elixir of Life through the Word of the Master."

Hari Ras : How to get it ?

(a) Through the Grace of God : God is the Water of Life and He is not apart from His own Essence, and it is He who may grant the gift of His own Life-stream, to whomsoever He may like.

"The Beloved is Himself the Amrit—the sweet elixir, and the life thereof,
The Beloved Himself hears His own prayer,
His beloved, O Nanak, gets to His sweet elixir."
—Sorath M.4

The wind bloweth where it listeth and so doth the Will and Pleasure of God.

"It is His glance of Grace that bestows the Hari Ras,
O Nanak ! through Hari Ras sing of the greatness of Hari."
—Suhi M.4

"Hari Ras comes to him to whomsoever He granteth, and the tongue delighteth in His praises,
By devotion to Naam, one ever lives in peace and remains absorbed therein." —Gauri M.3

(b) Through one's good fortune :

"A rare devotee of the Master tastes of the Hari Ras,
And lives in perpetual peace and ecstacy,
This one gets if he be the great fortunate enough." —Dhanasri M 3

"The Manna of Hari Ras is a great detaching factor,
Fortunate is he who gets this heavenly food."
—Asa M.4

"I have got an access to Hari Ras and I am now devoted to Hari with the grace of the Master,
It is my own good luck that I am now living a life like this." —Asa M.4

(c) Through the Master of Truth : It is with the grace of God that one comes across a Satguru and thereby is initiated with the Hari Ras, which, in turn, provides food to the soul and on It the soul thrives from day to day.

"This Hari Ras one gets through a mighty good fortune,
And he finds It who meets a Satguru,
O Nanak ! one forgets all the dull dross of the world,

When Hari comes to abide in the mind."

—Ramkali M.3

"A meeting with a Satguru is extremely auspicious,

As He implants Naam and one gets bread of Hari Ras." —Gauri M.3

"O Saints, how may I find the Lord? By whose glance of grace I may get enlivened.

Without the Lord I cannot live, O contact me with the Guru that I may drink the Water of life." —Gauri M.3

"Through the compassion of Satguru, I have got the bread of love,

With the Hari Ras in me, I have lost all other appetite. —Majh M.3

"Hari Ras is extremely sweet and all absorbing,

The soul that tastes of it, becomes dead to all outside and loses all other appetites."

—Gauri M 3

(d) Through the grace of a Master-soul :

"Through the grace of a Master-soul one gets the Hari Ras,

O Nanak ! it is by contacting the Naam that one is saved." —Asa M.3

"Hari Ras is a pure gift of the Master,

By remembrance of Hari, one can safely cross over." —Maru M.4

(e) Through the holy congregation :

"I have got access to Hari Ras through the holy congregation,

O Nanak ! such a soul is truly blessed."

—Asa M.5

"In the holy congregation there is Hari Ras,
A Master-soul drives away the fear of death."

—Sorath M.1

"One gets to the holy congregation through high merit,
And gains Hari Ras therein." —Dhanasri M.4

(f) Through acceptance of the Divine Will :

"By devotion to the Master, one accepts the Divine Will,
And quafs the nectar of life freely".

—Sarang War M.1

Hari Ras : Who gets it ?

A rare devotee of the Master is able to get Hari Ras and one who truly loves the Master. But all others being slaves of the mind and the senses remain far removed from It :

"O ! the Hari Ras is extremely refreshing and sweet,
Through devotion to the Guru, a rare soul gets to It." —Ramkali M.5

"A rare devotee of the Master tastes of the Hari Ras,
He lives in perpetual bliss all the time,
One gets to It through a mighty good luck."

—Dhansari M.3

"Now the five senses do not fly about,
Blessed is the tree that is laden with the life-giving fruit,

By devotion to the Master, one lives in eternal peace,
And all the time sings of God and partakes of the Manna." —Maru M.1

"A slave of the senses knows not the taste of Hari Ras,
Tormented as he is by the thorns and thistles of I-ness." —Gauri M.4

"The mind-ridden are lost through evil propensities and know not of Hari Ras,
Living in delusion, they throw away *Amrit* for a pot of porridge." —Bilawal War M.4

"A slave of the senses cannot taste the Hari Ras,
Bloated with I-ness, he is dogged by misfortunes." —Suhi M.4

'Hari Ras' is sweeter than the sweetest thing in the world ; and those who taste of it but once altogether lose an appetite for all else and hereafter become dead to the world and live life of perfect contentment :

"One may have all beauty and many wives to enjoy,
But without Hari Ras, all else is insipid.
—Asa M.5

"Those who once taste of the Hari Ras,
They are never bewildered by the trash."
—Gauri M.5

"If ye were to taste of the Hari Ras,
A mere taste of it shall make thee intoxicated."
—Gauri M.5

The devotees of the Lord prefer Hari Ras to everything else and It is peerless and unique in all respects.

"The riches of all the mountains and the seas of the world put together,
Hold out no attraction to the devotee of the Lord who prefers Hari Ras to everything else." —Kalyan M.4

Rishis, munis like Sankadek, Brahma, Sukh Dev and Prehlad, by drinking the Hari Ras, reached the highest spiritual attainment:

"All sages and seers, Sankadek, Sukh Dev, Brahma and Prehlad sing of Hari Ras,
They drank of the elixir of life and attained union with the Lord, O Nanak."
—Sarang M.5

Hari Ras : Its merits :

Hari Ras appears in the form of ripples in the Ocean of Naam. When the divine melodies become manifest, a soul is enraptured by the sweet strains and one remains immersed in a state of perpetual intoxication. The love of the world and what is worldly drops off automatically. The Muslim devouts have often tried to compare this with the effect of vintage wines because it momentarily makes one forgetful of the world around:

"With Hari Ras, one remains in Divine ecstacy all the time,
The love of the erstwhile charms of a sudden fade away,

A draught of Hari Ras is enough to bring in intoxication,
The rest instantly becomes a heap of trash."

—Asa M.5

"O God! my mind is all intoxicated,
Seeing the Merciful, I am in perfect bliss,
And ever drink the exhilarating Hari Ras."

—Sarang M.5

As this wine of divine love comes from the Master or *Murshid*, he is often described in poetical language as 'Saqi' or the Divine Cup-bearer. Hafiz, a great mystic poet, saith thus,—

"O Saqi! give me that wine which one cannot find even in paradise."

Bhai Nand Lal also prayed for the same:

"O Saqi! give me a cup bubbling over with the sparkling wine,
Wine that would at once give me intoxication and solve for me all mysteries."

Hari Ras offers us countless benefits. With Hari Ras one escapes all the sins and sorrows of the world. The inner egotism is cut off root and branch. The intellect gets sharpened and the lotus of the mind takes its proper position. The practice of Hari Ras leads to concentrated meditation, and one easily crosses over the ocean of the world and attains salvation or liberation once for all from the bondage of mind and matter, and then enters in and inherits the kingdom of God, now a lost domain to him.

"Let everyone take such a Hari Ras,
That is perfectly Divine in its richness."

—Gauri M.5

Gur Naam or Gurmukh Naam :

We have just a couple of more terms to consider in this connection which are allied and convey just the same thing. As the current of Naam or the Sound-principle is made manifest by the Guru or Master, it is often called 'Gur Naam' or the word of the Master, 'Gurmukh Naam' or the Word, the exposition whereof is given by the Master, or 'Gurmat Naam'—the Word that is made audible by following the instruction of the Master. A real devotee of the Master can get to It through the grace of the Guru and there is no other way to It. All these terms denote the hidden or inaudible Sound-current that is made both manifest and audible by the Master, who, at the time of initiation, gives full and detailed description of the process of inversion through self-analysis by practicing which, from day to day, one can develop his spiritual experience to any length one may like.

Disadvantages of not contacting the holy Naam :

(1) Without Naam, we are dead to true values of life :

"He alone wakes up to the Reality whom God may so desire and meditates on the Word of the Master.

O Nanak! they indeed are dead who do not commune with Naam, only a devotee doth live." —Ramkali M.3

"The peerless human body is cast by virtuous deeds and they that contact not the Naam destroy their very self,

Why do they not die who forget the Naam, for without the Naam the human life is of no value." —Gauri M.5

(2) Without Naam, one is blind and is being cheated :

"Without the Naam-contact, all your attachments are valueless for nothing shall abide with you,

Whatever you see around you is nothing but delusive matter that keeps you in bondage."

—Kanra M.5

"All pleasures and all delights are mere delusions,

O Nanak! precious is the Naam and they that get not the Naam lose their life in vain."

—Todi M.5

(3) Without Naam nothing is of any avail :

"All flesh is useful in one way or another, but useless is the man who contacts not the Naam." —Gauri M.5

"With all the enjoyments of the world one never feels satiated,

Ever consumed in invisible fires, all endeavours without Naam prove infructuous."

—Gauri M.5

(4) Without Naam one loses his respect for the self :

"Without Naam, one becomes a black sheep,
And leads an accursed life of no consequence."
—Asa M.4

"All through the ages, one without the Naam wallows in the dirt,
Devoid of devotion, he has neither glory nor respect,
Forgetful of the Naam, he passes his days in sorrowful tears." —Sri Rag M.1

(5) Without Naam one becomes an abode of all afflictions :

"Always sing the praises of God, and thy sorrows shall vanish,
By forgetting the Naam, O Nanak ! one is beset with difficulties." —Gujri War M.5

(6) Without Naam, one gets drenched in materialism and is ever in affliction :

"It is better by far to sterilise the mother's womb than that they produce children with no love for the Naam,
Their bodies are all hollow without contact with the Naam and they live and die a malingering death." —jaitsri M.4

"Ever-burdened with desires and wishes,
One lives a deserted life without Naam."
—Basant M.4

"Enslaved to the mind and the senses, one contacts not the Naam and is ever in pain and affliction,

Without contact between the spirit and the Naam, how can one have peace."

—Shalok M.3

"Everyone in the world is a unique gambler,
He wishes for all the joy at the cost of the Naam." —Gauri M.1

(7) Without Naam one is leprous and in the clutches of death :

"Whomsoever thou bestoweth the gift of the Naam, is the King of kings,
O Satgur, one without this precious gift, is ever in the gyres." —Maru M.5

"Ever engaged in the delights of the world, ye remember not the Lord,
O Nanak ! by forgetting the Naam, one forever comes and goes." —Gauri M.5

(8) Without Naam all are of low births and remain in distress :

"By devotion one rises in the scales of life, and acquires merit through the Word,
Without contacting the Naam, all are at the lowest rung of the creation and are filthy worms". —Asa M.3

"All real glory in the world comes through the Naam, and without it there is none,
The worldly glory is but a passing phase, and cannot last long." —Asa M.3

(9) Life without the Naam is a sheer waste :

"Forgetting the Word, one wanders in delusions,
Leaving the roots one clutches at the leaves and gets nothing." —Asa M.1

"Drunk deep in love for the self and the children,
O Nanak! without the Naam, existence is a wasteland." —Maru M.5

"One returns not to see his children, friends and the household,
Kabir saith: without contacting the Naam, life goes in vain." —Kedara Kabir

(10) The Giant wheel of life ever moves on for those who do not take to the Naam:

"Why hast thou forgotten the all-pervading Naam,
With the decay and the dissolution of the body one has ever to deal with the god of Death."
—Basant M.9

"Forget not the Lord or else you will fall into the clutches of Death,
In the end of the life's journey, O ignorant one, the minions of death shall torment thee."
—Basant M.1

"O Kabir! all the enjoyments of the world; betel leaves and cheroots,
All shall combine to land thee in the domain of Death without the aid of Naam."
—Shalok Kabir

(11) Without Naam, one is in misery:

"The Naam is the only companion after death,
And without it, there is the bondage of Death." —Gauri M.1

"All cunning and cleverness prove futile and one departs with tearful eyes,

O Nanak ! by forgetting the Naam, one gets no relief at His door." —Sri Rag M. I

"He alone suffers from penury and want, saith Kabir,
Who has in his heart no love for the Naam."
—Bhairon Kabir

II

"SHABD"

OR

The Sound Principle

SHABD

In Sanskrit 'Shabd' is a root but we do not know its construction, as in the case of other words. It means *awaz* (sound), *akhar* (word), *kalam* (talk), *Ism* (name), *zamir* (essence), *bachan* (spoken word), *wazahat* (exposition), *Srahat* (clarity), *izhar* (expression), *takrir* (speech) etc. Whatever one speaks or hears, is Shabd, and it reveals the real nature of things and explains the hidden reality or mystery thereof. But in the terminology of the saints, the term 'Shabd, has a much deeper significance, quite different from its commonly accepted connotation.

Shabd is God and is live principle :

Before the creation, Shabd existed in Its *latent* form and as such had no name. In this state, it was something completely established in Itself and was thus known as *Ashabd* (soundless), *Anaam* (nameless), *Alakh* (ununderstandable), *Agam* (inconceivable), *Akeh* (unutterable) and *Akath* (indescribable). When it came into manifestation, it was called 'Shabd' or 'Naam'.

"Shabd when hidden was Anaam,
Shabd in manifestation became Naam."

—Swami Shib Dyal Singh Ji

Before Its manifestation, there was no form whatsoever ; nor there was any sun nor moon

nor sky nor earth, for then the Shabd existed by Itself in a formless state. The essence of Shabd is pure consciousness. It is the active life-principle of the whole creation. It is the guiding and controlling power behind all that exists. All manifestation is the result of Shabd and without it nothing exists or subsists. It is the very life-essence of everything. The Muslim divines call it *Johar* (essence) and the Hindu saints describe it as *Mul* (the root cause). It is the vital principle immanent in every form and permeating all, the visible and the invisible. It is the causeless cause, the eternal self-existing life, running endlessly in and out of time. It is the very soul of the creative power immanent and all-pervading even to the purely spiritual realm—Sat Lok. Shabd is the primal cause of both birth and dissolution.

"Both the birth and death come about by Shabd,
The rebirth too is because of Shabd." —Majh M.3

Everything from beginning to end exists in Shabd. The physical elements, the subtle and ethereal powers and vibrations, the causal seeds and essences, one and all, are from Shabd and nothing but Shabd personified. We live and have our very being in Shabd and ultimately dissolve into Shabd. All the scriptures of the world tell us that Shabd is above the material and efficient cause and all-controlling Power of the universe.

"He is all in all Himself and revels in his creation by supporting it by Shabd."

—Basant M.1

"Thou art the ruling power and administrate all,
There is none like Thee in the entire creation,
In Thy Word thou art manifesting Thyself.
Whatever Thou wisheth that comes to pass."

—Asa M.4

Shabd : What It is ?

The subject of Shabd is such that we cannot do justice to it by discursive reasoning. All that can be said is that 'Shabd' implies the power of God that has created and is sustaining the various grand divisions, divisions and subdivisions of the vast creation of God. It is a current from the Ocean of Consciousness and is characterised by Sound-vibrations, or in other words It is a live and active principle which emanating from God is enlivening all creation. It is a handy instrument with which God creates, controls and sustains His vast universe. It acts as a saving life-line between the Creator and His creation and serves as a golden bridge between the two. The divine currents, like the ethereal waves of a wireless set spread out in the atmosphere, in all the directions of the compass, giving out delectable strains of music. We, however, cannot catch the ethereal vibrations and listen to the divine melody until we get in tune with the Infinite by adjusting our

mental apparatus. The ore we become etherealised, the more we come in tune with the heavenly music. Shabd is the connecting link between God and Man. In brief, 'Shabd' alone is the true religion—a binding force that rebinds us to our source. All the powers of Nature depend on and work through this Shabd or the Sound-principle. The Pranas or the vital airs that are the source of all energy, electrical, mechanical, magnetic or atomic, most active agents in the physical material plane, and are but an outer manifested form of the Shabd. Like the electric waves with which the whole atmosphere is charged, Shabd in its most subtle form, pervades everywhere in Its fullness and is thus the Creator. Guru Nanak, has, in the Jap Ji, called It Hukam and described Its working, as :

"All things are manifestations of His Will,
But His Will is beyond description.
By His Will is matter quickened into life,
By His Will is greatness obtained.
By His Will some are born high and others low,
By His Will are men's joys and sorrows ordained,
By His Will (the impious) wander in endless trasmigration.
All exist under His Will,
And nothing stands outside.
One attuned with His Will, O Nanak is Wholly freed from ego." —Jap Ji St. 2

"From harmony, from heavenly harmony, this universal frame began." —Dryden

Shabd is of two kinds: outer and inner or *Varan-Atmak* an *Dhun-Atmak* respectively. The *Varan-Atmak* to a certain extent gives a clue to the *Dhun-Atmak* Shabd. It is a matter of common experience how martial music stirs up men to arms, sad dirges bring tears to the eyes, loving strains bewitch the mind, doleful songs strike the spirit, solemn notes inspire awe and reverence. Again, the words of the wise act as a soothing balm for the lacerated minds, the smarting taunts cut one to quick.

"Words there be that cut the very heart-strings,
And Words may lead to profound renunciation,
Words again are the source of discrimination,
Words may work as soothing balm or may strike misery,
Some of them inspire hope and others engender helplessness." — Kabir

"What passion cannot Music raise and quell."
— Drydan

When there is so much magic in *Varan-Atmak* Shabd, one cannot possibly imagine the power that lies hidden in the *Dhun-Atmak* Shabd, which is very subtle and ethereal in nature. The inner Shabd is sublime and pure, with an irresistible, magnetic pull which a freed soul cannot but plunge into.

Shabd is the Creator :

In all the religious scriptures, 'Shabd' is stated to be the creator of the universe. The Vedas tell us that 'Nad' brought into being fourteen Bhavans or regions. In the Quran, it is mentioned that 'Kalma' created fourteen Tabaqs or divisions. St. John, in his Gospel, has written that 'Word' is the root cause of the creation.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him : and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life ; and life was the light of men...

—I : 1-5

The sacred Sikh scriptures also tell of the same thing—the entire manifestation has sprung from 'Shabd' and is being maintained by Him. The sun, the sky, the earth and the heavens all are within His controlling power and there is no place where He is not. The immanence of Shabd is all-pervasive.

"Shabd is the directive agent of God,
And is the cause of all creation." —Parbhati M.3

"The earth and the sky were made by Shabd,
Shabd has been the source of all light.
The whole creation sprang from Shabd,
O Nanak ! Shabd is the very life of life.

—Janam Sakhi M.1

"Having set up everything, He beheld His own imprint therein,
He established the beautiful earth and the starry welkin,
He raised the tabernacle of heaven with no pillars to support,
He created the sun and the moon with all the starry host and His light is pervading all."

—Malar War M.I

Again, 'Shabd' is not only the creator but He is the destroyer also and the rebirth of the creation takes place through Him,—

"Both the creation and the dissolution are from Shabd,
And Shabd again is the cause of re-creation".

—Majh M.3

In the Hindu scriptures, it is described as the essence of ether, which goes to show that It is more subtle than ether and is all-pervading. Its presence, in fact, is felt in the union of matter and spirit, for every union means and implies vibration, and vibration is caused by Shabd or Sound—the active life-principle permeating all space, nay receding far back into Itself for God too is described as 'Shabd' as the Power of God (Shabd) is not distinct and separate from God : God and Godhead (God-in-action) always go together.

"Thy 'Shabd' is Thyself and whatever Thou ordaineth that comes to pass." —Asa M.4

All the religious books, including Vedas the oldest of them, have described 'Shabd' as the primal manifest form of God. In Sam Ved, we have,—

"Shabd is Brahm and 'Silence' too is Brahm,
Brahm alone is vibrating everywhere."

The Mohammedan divines tell us that the world owes its very life and existence to Shabd. Shamas Tabrez saith,—

"World came into being through 'Saut' (Shabd or Sound Principle).
And from 'Saut' spread all light."

Again Abdul Razaq Kashi, tells us,—

"The Great Name (Ism-i-azam) is the very essence and life of all names,
Its manifested form (Shabd) is supporting the entire creation,
It is the great sea in which we all appear as waves,
He alone can understand this mystery who belongs to our order."

'Shabd' is not the subject either of reading, ritual or reciting :

The inner sound principle is all-conscious and too subtle for all that is of the flesh—to wit the ears, the tongue and the pen. It is an unwritten law and an unspoken language. It is self-existing, self-sustaining and self-supporting and yet is the very life of all that exists both in the animate and inanimate creation. But It

can be realised in the deepest depths of the soul, for the two are of the same essence, the soul being but a drop of the ocean of All-Consciousness. In the Sikh scriptures, It is also called 'Sacha Shabd' or the True Word,—

"With the True Word, one knows the Truth,
With the True Sound, one sings the glory of the Lord." —Prabhati M.1

"Meditate on the feet of the Master, and leaving aside all thy cleverness, be absorbed in the True Word." —Sri Rag M.5

"Remember the Lord, O dear friend,
And ever love the True Word." —Basant M.5

Shabd cannot be apprehended by the senses, for :

"It can be seen without eyes,
It can be heard without ears."
—Majh War M.1

Lao Tzu speaks of it,—

"Who knows speaks not, who speaks knows not."

Again,—

"True knowledge is the action of the soul and is perfect without senses." —Ben Jonson

Maulana Rumi sayeth,—

"The Turks, Kurds, Parsis, Goans and the Arabs,
They have, one and all, cognised It without the aid of lips and ears."

The Upnishadic sages have described It as 'Pranav' or that which can be heard through the Pranic vibrations, without the help of tongue,

lips and the palate, for It is reverberating of Itself in and out of space.

Sant Kabir has called It 'Videh' for It is above the realm of physical existence and can be apprehended by the soul when unclogged from bodily raiment.

"All sing of the Shabd without realising that It is Videh or the bodiless,
No tongue can describe It, but soul may contact It within."

Hazrat Bahu, in this context, saith,—

"Everyone repeats the 'Kalma' orally, by words of mouth,
A rare soul may repeat it with the tongue of thought,
And whosoever repeats It within with loving devotion,
He can hardly describe it into so many words."

Again,—

"My Master has taught me a lesson, a lesson that goes on repeating itself,
And is being heard in the ears without the aid of stop-cocks."

Maulana Rumi has beautifully described It, as,—

"O God, lead my soul to that blessed place, wherein flow symphonies with musical notes."

All religions teach of Shabd :

In all religious books we find references of Shabd : Hindu scriptures speak of It as 'Shabd

Brahm' and 'Ashabd Brahm' or 'Nad' that is responsible for the creation of the world. The ancient sages and seers sang of It in their songs, and called it 'Shruti', meaning that which is heard. The esoteric teachings were passed on from Master to disciple and the Word was made manifest individually after years of spiritual discipline. In the Upnishadic Age, it came to be known as 'Udgit' or Song of the Beyond, meaning at once of the other world (spiritual) and beyond the senses, for senses could not comprehend It and one were to transcend them to catch Its strains (cf: Chhandyog—first part and Maitreya Upnishad—6th Chapter). Other words that also came in vogue for It are 'Pranav' and 'Aum' for It could be heard within the mental ears alone and could be sung with the *pranic* vibrations without any outer aids of tongue or lips. In Chap. 6 of the Maitreya Upnishad it is stated that there are two Brahms, one Shabd Brahm and the other Ahabad Brahm—and to reach Ashabad Brahm, one has to meditate, in the first instance, on the Shabd Brahm which has different kinds of sounds that can be heard within by stop-cocking the ears with the thumbs and thereby one can cross over to the 'Ashabd or Gupat Brahm', a state beyond the three Gunas and the three mental conditions, and called 'Turiyapad' or Super-sensual plane.

In 'Yog-Sandhya' (Page 112), it is enjoined that a yogin, practicing yogic disciplines, ought to close his ears with the thumbs and listen within him the musical strains of *chid-akash* or mental horizon and thereby still the mind and attain the *Turiya* state and merge in the *Avyakat*.

In Chhandyog Upnishad (III. 17-6 and 9-3) it is mentioned that Nad (heavenly music) springs from the Universal Sun (of Brahmand) and that this secret was given by Angris Rishi to Krishna, the darling of Devki.

Guru Amardas tells us in Rag Bhairon that Bhagat Prehlad was saved by 'Shabd',—

"It (Shabd) has been the saving life-line in all the ages,
Prehlad, the son of the demon-king, knew neither Gaitri nor any rituals,
He became one with God through contact with the Shabd." —Bhairon M.3

In Gita it is said,—

"Though under the sway of the senses, one feels drawn towards God by force of the habit acquired in the previous births nay, even the seeker of enlightenment transcends the Shabd Brahm.
The Yogi, however, who diligently takes up the practice, attains perfection in this very life with the help of latencies of many births

and being thoroughly purged of sin, forthwith reaches the supreme goal."

—VI: 44-45

In Shalok 31 of Nad-bind Upnishad, we have,—

"A yogin ought to sit in *Sidha Asan* (a yogic posture), and adopting, *Vaishnavimudra* should hear within him the 'sound' coming from the right side."

In 'Yog Sandhya', an elaborate account is given of the practice of 'hearing the Shabd'.

In Vak-Ambrani Sukat of Rig Veda and Sukat 30 of the Athrav Veda, there are hymns in praise of Shabd. In Hans Upnishad of the latter it is given that one who does Japa of the Hans Mantra, for ten millions of time, comes to the realisation of Nad. It is also stated that Nad comprises ten different types of melodies, nine of which are to be passed over and the tenth, which resembles the sound of the thunder of distant clouds, is to be meditated upon and practiced for It takes one to 'Par-Brahm'.

In Hath Yog Pradipka, there are many Shalokas in praise of Shabd (e.g. Shalokas 80, 81 83, 84, 90-92, 95-98, 101 and 105). In Vedas, It is talked of as 'Nad' and 'Akash Bani' (Voice from Heaven). In the Buddhist scriptures, It is referred to as 'Sonorous Light' or 'Flaming Sound'.

The ancient greeks also spoke of 'Shabd'. In the writings of Socrates, we read that he

heard within him a peculiar sound which pulled him irresistibly to higher spiritual realms. Pythagoras also talked of Shabd. Plato spoke of it as 'Music of the Spheres'. In Greek language, we have the term Logos', from 'logo' to speak, stands for the 'Word' or Second Person of the Trinity. This term 'Logos', also figures in both Hebrew and Christian philosophy and theology and in its mystic sense is used both by the Hellenistic and Neo-platonist philosophies. St. John has used the term 'Word'. It is a 'Sound Principle' (Shabd) emanating from the Great Silence (Ashbad). In Chinese scriptures, it is known as 'Tao'. Lao Tze in the fourth century B.C., used the word 'Tao' for denoting the hidden principle of Universe and it means 'Road' or 'Way'. In the avestic writings of Zoroaster, the prophet of life, we come across the word 'Sraosha', which stands for the angel of inspiration that inspires the Universe. It is a Power apart from the six spiritual Powers of which Zoroaster speaks of. It is the cult of Eternal Life and is from the Sanskrit root 'Shru' (to hear) and means that Power of God which can be heard. In the Zend Avesta, we have an invocation to Mazda praying for the gift of 'Sraosha' for those whom He loves. It is the same as Shabd in the terminology of the saints.

In our own times, right from Sant Kabir and Guru Nanak down to Guru Gobind Singh, all

the ten Gurus, Dadu, Jagjiwan, Tulsi, Darya Sahib, Baba Lal Das, Paltu and many another preached of 'Shabd'.

St. John begins his gospel, with the memorable words,—

"In the beginning was the 'Word', and the 'Word' was with God, and the 'Word' was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." —1 : 1

Again in Isiah 40-8, we have,—

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the 'Word' of our God shall stand forever."

We read of,—

"Now the parable is this. The seed is the 'Word' of God." —Luke 8 : 11

Madam Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophical Society, has described It as the 'Voice of God'. In the Masonic Order, we hear of It as the 'Lost Word' for the search whereof the Mason Masters set up their Order.

In Quran, there is an Ayat—God commanded and it was done; 'kun-feu-kun'. This, in fact, is the 'Kalma' with the Muslims.

The Sufis, an Order of Muslim mystics, call it as 'Vadan'. It is said as :

"If the Anaam (Nameless) did not wish to manifest Himself and become 'Naam', there would have been no 'sound' and no universe."

Hazrat Inayat Khan, a Muslim divine of the Mystic Order called 'Sufis', tells us that this creation is nothing but the 'Music of God' for It is the outcome or manifestation of His Power. He calls It 'Saute Sarmadi' or the intoxicating vintage from the Garden of Allah (God) and has given an elaborate description of it, as would appear from the following account :—

All space is filled with 'Saute Sarmad' or the 'Abstract Sound'. The vibrations of this Sound are too fine to be either audible or visible to the material ears or eyes, since it is even difficult for the eyes to see the form and colour of the etherial vibrations on the external plane. It was the 'Saute Sarmad', the sound of the abstract, which Mohammed heard in the cave of Ghare-Hira when he became lost is his ideal. The Quran refers to this Sound in the words: 'Be and all became' (Kun-feu-Kun). Moses heard this very Sound on Mount Sinnai (Koh-i-Toor), when in communion with God. The same Word was audible to the Christ when absorbed in his Heavenly Father in the wilderness. Shiva heard the same Anahad Naad during his Samadhi in the Himalayas. The flute of Krishna is symbolic of the same Sound allegorically explained. This sound is the source of all revelation to the Masters to whom It is revealed from within and it is therefore that they know and teach the one and the same Truth.....

The knower of the mystery of the Sound knows the mystery of the whole Universe. Whosoever has followed the strains of this Sound has forgotten all earthly distinctions and differences; and has reached the same goal of Truth in which all the Blessed Ones of God unite. Space is within the body, as well as, around it; in other words the body is in the space and space is in the body.

This being the case, the Sound of the Abstract is always going on within, around and about man. Man does not hear It as a rule, because his consciousness is entirely centered in his material existence. Man becomes so absorbed in his experiences in the external world through the medium of the physical body that space, with all its wonders of light and sound, appears to him blank... The limited volume of earthly sound is so concrete, that it dims the effect of the Sound of the Abstract to the sense of hearing; although in comparison to It the sounds of the earth are like that of a whistle to a drum. When the Abstract Sound is audible all other sounds become indistinct to the mystic.

The Sound of the Abstract is called Anahad in the Vedas, meaning unlimited sound. The Sufis name It Sarmad, which suggests the idea of intoxication. The word intoxication is here used to signify upliftment, the freedom of the

soul from its earthly bondage. Those who are able to hear the Saute Sarmad and meditate on It are relieved from all worries, anxieties, sorrows, fears and diseases; and the soul is freed from captivity in the senses and in the physical body. The soul of the listener becomes all-pervading Consciousness ; and his spirit becomes the battery which keeps the whole universe in motion.....

This Sound develops through ten different aspects because of Its manifestation through the different tubes of the body (Nadis) ; it sounds like thunder, the roaring of the sea, the jingling of bells, running water, the buzzing of bees, the twittering of sparrows, the Vina, the whistle, or the sound of Shankha (Conch) until it finally becomes 'Hu' the most sacred of all sounds. This Sound 'Hu' is the beginning and end of all sounds, be they from man, bird, beast, or thing.

In the Muslim scriptures, It is variously described as 'Kalam-i-Ilahi' (the Voice of God), 'Nada-i-Asmani' (the Sound from Heaven), 'Ism-i-Azam' (the Great Name), 'Saut-i-Sarmadi' (the Sound intoxicant), 'Saut-i-Nasira' (the Sound Melodious), 'Kalam-i-Majid' (The Great Commandment) and 'Kalam-i-Haq' (the Voice of Truth) which can be heard inside and It was taught as 'Sultan-ul-Izkar' or the King of Zikars. We have innumerable references to this in the teachings of Mohammedan fakirs,—

"Rise above thy mental horizon, O brave soul,
And listen to the call of Music coming from above."
—Maulana Rumi

"The whole world is reverberating with Sound,
To listen It ye must unseal thy inner ears,
Then shalt thou hear an unending Music,
And that shall lead thee beyond the confines of death."
—Shah Niaz

"An unceasing Sound is floating adown from the heaven,
I wonder how ye are engaged in pursuits of no avail."
—Hafiz

"Drive away all scepticism from thy mind,
And listen to the strains of heavenly music,
And receive within thee the messages of God,
For these come only by holy communion with the self."
—Maulaua Rumi

"The Prophet declared that He heard the Voice of God,
And It fell on his ears as clearly as any other sound,
But God has sealed thy ears,
And so ye listen not to His Voice."
—Maulana Rumi

About the prophet Mohammed, it is said that at the age of forty he began receiving messages from God, after he had for fifteen years practiced communion with 'Awaz-i-Mustqim' (Anhad Shabd or the Ceaseless Word), and had seen the glimpses of Truth (flashes of heavenly light)

for seven years. At one time, he remained for two years, in the cave of Hara in meditation.

—Al-anwar of Maulana Sheikh Mohd. Akram Sabri

Again, on page 106, of the same, it is stated that the prophet practiced, in the cave of Hara, for six years, the Sultan-ul-Azkar (Surat-Shabd Yoga) and that Hazrat Abdul Qadir jillani, did the same for twelve years in that sacred cave.

All the Sikh Gurus and other saints, time and again, taught of this very thing in very clear terms. Thus spoke Guru Nanak,—

"With stone-deaf ears thou hast lost all thy wits,
For thou hast not got contact with the 'Shabd',
And by slavery to the Mind thou hast forfeited thy human birth,
Without the Master-soul, one remains blind to the Reality." —Bhairon M.1

"Hundreds of moons and thousands of suns may illumine the world,
But without a Master-soul, they miserably fail to dispel the darkness of the human mind."

—Nanak

Similarly, Guru Amar Das tells us,—

"Without contact with 'Shabd', one remains stark blind and deaf,
Of what avail is their life in this world ?
They get not the water of life and escape not the endless cycle of births." —Sorath M.3

"Practice ye the Word of the Master,
For one knows the Reality through the Word."
—Bihagra War M.4

"Without the Master, there is no holy congregation,
Without the Word one cannot reach (know) the Reality." —Maru M.3

From the above, it becomes sufficiently clear that all the Master-souls, whether Hindus, Muslims, Christians and countless others were conversant with the science of the Word, though they did not expound it as a regular science. Most of them tell us of Anhad Shabd only, leading up to *Und* and *Brahmand* or the subtle and cosmic regions. But perfect saints irrespective of whether they belonged to one religion or the other have gone even beyond this and have spoken of Sar Shabd and Sat Shabd as well and of regions beyond Brahmand (Par Brahmand i.e. Sach Khand, Alakh and Agam Deshas).

Shabd signifies Sound-Principle:

What is sound and how is sound produced? are the natural questions in this context. Some say that sound is produced when two things strike, one against the other. Others say that where there is vibration, there is sound. It is, of course, true that sound does follow concussion and vibration. But the 'Sound' of which the saints speak of is quite different from what we

ordinarily mean by it, in common parlance. It is something very subtle and is characterised by Consciousness as exhibited in fecundity and growth principles. It is the very life of life that permeates in all things, visible and invisible. It is an active and live agent of God-head and may briefly be described as God-in-action, call it what one may, 'Kun', as do the Muslims 'Word', as the Christians say, 'Shabd' or 'Naam' as taught by the saints. This Sound-principle is *Jnana* or the real knowledge of the Rishis of old, the cult of eternal life of Zoroaster, *Logos* of the Greeks, Tao of the Chinese and *Budhi* or enlightenment of Gautama and *'Sphota'* or sound-essence of the philosophers.

"Dhun or the Sound-current is both true knowledge and true meditation and remains indescribable all the same." —Sri Rag M.I

This 'Sound' is in Its fullness in everything, though the measure of its manifestation may vary from one thing to another. It is even in stones and wood, apparently the insensate things. The fact is that all things in Nature are of atoms and atoms are full of energy as the phrase 'atomic energy' denotes. It is because of this energy that the atoms are always in a state of motion and as they vibrate, a natural rhythmic sound is produced. The recent researches in science testify this truth. 'Change' is the law of life and it does follow vibration

and motion, all of which ultimately depend on the Sound-principle working in space and out of space.

"Every moment, every minute and every hour,
the world is in a state of continuous flux."

The scienticts have found out that even the mighty Himalayas are growing from age to age though the growth may be imperceptible all the time but surely enough there it is—it may be a fraction of an inch in the course of a century or so. Thus all things in Nature are characterised by vibration of rhythmic movement and this in itself implies the presence therein of the Sound-principle, no matter the things may be visibly in motion or not. This Sound-principle is the essence or *'Johar'* of one life in all things.

"Things full or empty are yet filled with Music,
See! how the sound comes from out the drum."

This Sound-principle is all-pervading and is the very soul of all that exists. This current of life-consciousness is so subtle that it cannot be heard unless one acquires Transcendental hearing. A mystic has beautifully described it, as,—

"Dry are the strings, the wooden body and the
stretched leather,
How do they give out the divine melodies?"

Sound or Word is in fact the Creator of the Universe. All this manifestation is because of Him.

"Had not the Nameless assumed a name,
The world would not have come into being."

The beloved Lord God is ever calling us back from times out of mind, but the pity is that we do not attend to Him.

"My friend is ever in converse with thee,
What a pity, ye listen not to the ancient call."
—Niaz

The Sound of the friend, beloved or God as It is called, is reverberating everywhere. A Muslim mystic poet, speaks of it as,—

"All the seven heavens are echoing with the Sound,
The ignorant do not hear it nor catch the strains." —Hafiz

"By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." —Matt. 13 : 14

The Sound is by Itself and of Itself. In the material or physical region and materio-spiritual realms (Pind and Und), It is mixed up with and enclosed by matter. The Master makes It manifest in the *Sukhmana* or *Shah Rag* in the region of the forehead.

"Hear ye the Music in the Sukhman, and get absorbed in the unending song."

Again,—

"And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee saying, this is the Way, Walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." —Isiah 30 : 21

For spiritual knowledge and self realisation, the practice of the Sound-current (Shugal-i-Naghma-i-yazdani) is very necessary for it is by hearing the Divine Music that the soul is pulled out of the material and mental clogs of the body and is led to higher spiritual regions from where the Sound emanates and its reverberations are heard below in the body. It is a continuous and unending Music, of which Maulana Rumi says,—

"Catch hold of the Music that lasts through eternity,
Search for the sun that never sets."

Again, the people of the world are quite ignorant of it. A rare individual practices it after it is made manifest by some Master-soul.

"Enter ye the temple of the body and listen to the divine melodies,
Those sitting around thee, shall not hear them."

—Maulana Rumi

In the noisy swirl of the work-a-day fast life that we lead, we cannot hear the soft and gentle echoes of the Music floating down from afar. All those who practiced the Sound-current, in whatever time and in whatever clime have spoken of these melodies, of course, to the extent of his approach and mental apparatus. Even now, those persons whether young or old who are put on the Way by some competent satguru with a commission, do bear testimony to this sempiternal experience.

In the Upnishads, we have an account of these musical notes. These resemble to a certain extent the gentle murmurs of the vast sea, low rumbling thunders of the distant clouds, the continuous splash of a water-fall and ultimately merge into the sound of a gong or a conch, and develop into the blast of a trumpet, a thundering drum, sharp violin and a flute (Nad-bind Upnishad Shalok 33, 34).

Mahatma Charan Das, in his book Bhagti Sagar, has described ten types of melodies—the sweet warblings of the birds, the chirping of the green hoppers or maggotes, tinkling of the bells, sound of the gong, conch, playing of the cymbals, thunder of the clouds, the roar of a lion, violin and the flute.

In Hath-yoga Pradipka, we have an account of ten kinds of Nad like the buzz of flower flies, tinkling of anklets, sound of conch, bell and cymbals ; flute, drum-beat and other musical instruments and the roar of a lion etc.

In *Sar Bachan*—Hidayat Nama, Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji gives a wonderful accounts of the divine orchestra, comprising of ten musical notes resembling what has been said above, as one enters in *Sahansdal Kanwal* or the region of thousand petalled lights.

Madame Blavatsky, a Russian theosophist, initiated into theosophy in 1856, while in Tibet, the founder of Theosophical Society in New

York in 1857 and in Adyar, in India (1879), and the author of a controversial work 'Isis Unveiled' (1877); writes in her book 'Voice of the Silence' :

"The first is the nightingales' sweet voice chanting a song of parting to its mate. The second comes as a sound of silver cymbals of the *Dhyanis* awakening the twinkling stars. The next is plaint melodies of the ocean spirit imprisoned in its shell. And this is followed by the chant of Vina. The fifth like the sound of bamboo flute shrills in the ears. It changes into a trumpet blast. The last vibrates like the dull rumbling of thunder clouds.

Amir Khusro, a great scholar and a mystic poet (disciple of Kh. Nizam-ud-Din Chishti) has described these sounds (cf. Tazkra-i-Ghousia—page 332), thus,—

"First is the hum of the bees and the second is the sound of anklets,
The third is that of the conch and the fourth that of a gong,
The fifth is a trumpet-blast and the sixth that of a flute,
The seventh is of a Bhir, the eight of a mardang (drum beat) and the ninth of a Shahnai (Naferi),
And the tenth doth resemble the roar of a lion,
Such indeed is the Heavenly Orchestra, O Khusro.

In these ten melodies, a yogin gets absorbed,
The senses get stilled and so doth the mind, saith Khusro.
With the flourish of the limitless Music within,
All the lusts of the flesh and the deadly sins fly off,
The Master too has a wonderful world of his own,
Khusro is now fully engrossed within himself."

All these melodies come swarming within as the pilgrim soul starts on the Path; but of all these, one must catch the sound of a gong or a conch for these in particular are connected with the higher spiritual realms, the various mansions in the house of our Father.

"None knows where the abode of the Beloved is,
But sure enough the sound of gong comes floating therefrom." —Hafiz

Shabd has divine melody in it,—

"True Word emanates the tunes of Sahaj, and the mind gets absorbed in Truth,
Ineffable and wonderful is the Word of the immaculately pure, and only a Guru's devotee implants." —Sarang M.3

Why do we not hear the Sound-principle?

Though Shabd is ever reverbrating in each one of us but we do not hear it. The reason for this is not far to seek. So long as the mind stuff is in a state of perpetual storm and stress, is torn by countless conflicting passions

and desires, feeds fat on the food of egotism, and is tossed about on the endless waves of worldly life, it cannot possibly catch the slow and sublime rythmic vibrations of the subtle Sound nor can acquire any love for the same.

"As long as the mind is in a state of perpetual flux and unrest, and is filled with thoughts of I-am-ness,
'Shabd' fails to impart Its sweet fragrance and 'Naam' fails to inspire love and attraction."
—Sarang War M.4

Maulana Rumi likewise saith,—

"Your ears cannot listen to the Music of the Sound,
Perverted as you are, you have lost the very sense of hearing."

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Christ says,—

"For this peoples' heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them." —13 : 15

'Shabd' is the Voice of God and His primal manifestation. It is pervading everywhere in and out of space.

"The Word of the Master shows the way to God-realisation." —Basant M.1

This Sound-principle has often been referred to as 'Bani' as well,—

"Bani has been reverberating through the four ages,
Emanating from Truth, it sings of Truth."
—Sri Rag M.3

The 'Bani' pervades everywhere. It is known as Shabd or Naam, and has sweetness in It.

"In every age, Bani has been known as Shabd,
Sweet is the Naam and mind longs for It."
—Sorath M.3

What a pity for the Jiva, clogged as it is and hemmed in by mind and matter, on all sides, has lost the angel in him and as such cannot listen to the subtle and sublime Sound of the Beloved.

"Alas! Ye are imprisoned behind the walls of the finitude (body and bodily adjuncts),
And, listen not to the sublime Sound of the Merciful." —Maulvi Rumi

This 'Sound' is an eternal call for a return home,—

"There comes a perpetual call from afar,
Calling thee back to thine own home."
—Tulsi Sahib

The Sublime Sound, cannot, of course, be heard by the physical ears. There is a Way for our listening to the divine Music, which can be heard by the inner faculty of transcendental hearing and the same can be trained, developed and pressed into service through the grace of

some Master-soul, for no amount of worldly knowledge, wisdom and ingenuity can help in this matter. Though science has not yet been able to probe into this mystery, yet it can be resolved and experienced by actual experimentation in the laboratory of the self with the instruction and guidance of the saints. The results of the recent scientific investigations have now revealed the presence of rythmic motion even in atoms and scientific findings are every day coming closer to the reality.

How can we listen to the Sound-principle?

The next natural question with us is as to how the Shabd can be contacted and attuned with. The saints tell us that we can actually listen to Sound-principle, if we could but introvert and stop listening to the outer sounds of the world around us. In other words, we must learn to recede into our own self, by a process of inversion and become a pure self by disimprisoning the soul from the facts of life before we can qualify the self, for self realisation that comes by listening to the Sound-current. A holy communion with and practice of the 'Sound' gradually disenfranchises the soul of all that is of the world and reveals the cult of love, life and light that is at the back of all creation. We have in brief to stop the outflowing energy through the sense organs particularly the eyes, the ears, and the tongue, to concentrate it at

the still point in the body, the centre of the soul, leaving the mind high and dry, before we can listen in Its fullness to the Music of the soul.

"Close down the three outlets and attend to the ceaseless Music,
O Nanak ! in the deep silence of the soul, there is a perpetual light with no sunrise and sun-set." —Pran Sangli

Kabir saith as,—

"Close down thine eyes, ears and the mouth,
And hear ye the unending melody of the Shabd."

Shah Niaz speaketh as,—

"Sound is pervading the whole world in Its fullness,
Ye can surely listen to It with Transcendental hearing,
This ye can do by closing the outer bodily ears,
For surely then shall ye hear the endless song,
And it shall take thee beyond the sway of destruction and dissolution."

Apart from physical senses, we have with us, subtle senses much more powerful than the former. At present these subtle senses are lying with us dormant and out of use. They can, by regular practice, be wakened into consciousness and pressed into use in the astral world, where we can witness and experience supra-mental patterns and colours, just as we do on the physical plane, nay with much more clarity and understanding than we do here.

"Along with the five physical senses, we are endowed with five subtle senses as well,
These are of sterling gold when compared with the others of copper value." —Maulana Rumi

'Shabd' can, thus, be heard by the ears of thought. Both the soul and the Shabd are of the same spiritual essence and as such soul can without the aid of physical senses, apprehend the subtle Sound.

"Soul is of the essence of God and is His very own self,
And It can sing His praises in an unspoken language without any outer aids (viz. of tongue lips or palate)." —Shah Niaz

In the holy Quran also it is stated that 'soul' is the fiat or decree of God. It is His authorisation that pervades everywhere, upholding the sky and the earth and all that exists.

Where does 'Shabd' dwell and how It can be contacted ?

There are ten portals of the body, of which the nine are visible while the tenth is invisible.

"The citadel of the body has nine open doorways, while the tenth is closely shut in secret,
None can have access through the tenth—the Way in, except through practice of the Guru's Word." —Ram. War M.3

"Enter ye in at the Strait gate ; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to

destruction, and many there be which go in thereat, because strait is the gate and narrow is the Way, which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." —Matthew 7:13-14

"Strive to entre in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you will seek to enter in but shall not be able." —Luke 13:24

As long as the soul is wandering in and out of the nine portals of the body, it, all the time, is unwillingly being drained of its secret energy or Johar. With this constant flow of energy outside, it remains a complete stranger to the Reality within its own self and does not know the latent potentialities of God-head lodged in its very nature.

"A whore (mind ridden soul) madly in love with the nine portals can hardly get to the Reality." —Gauri Kabir

Guru Amar Das also advises that we should close down our nine portals, still the mind and then 'tap inside' (as Emerson puts it) and push the Way in to the mansion of the Beloved from where unceasing Music is floating down day and night, but can be contacted through the practice as may be enjoined by a Master-soul.

"Closing down the nine doors, seek ye the tenth that leads to thy True Home,
There the ceaseless Music plays round the clock but can be heard through the Master's Dispensation. —Majh M.3

Guru Nanak describes this so beautifully,—

"*Sukhmana, Ida* and *Pingla* cannot be known unless the Inconceivable makes one conceive,
O Nanak! the True Master makes the Word audible by bringing one above the three."

—Ramkali M.I

It means that one cannot fully commune with the Word of the True Master unless one completely transcends the body consciousness. In the realm of mind and matter, as far as three *Tatwas* reign supreme, the Sound-current works in union with them for the benefit of the physical creation, but beyond them, is the Word in its primordial form unalloyed by any of these things.

The Sound-principle stands by Itself and is independent of everything for It is self-existing. *Siddhas*, once, asked Guru Nanak,—

"Where does abide the Sound that ferries us across the ocean of delusive matter ?
Whereon stand the Pranas, (vibrations), as they extend out 10 fingers from the nostrils ?"

—Ram Kali M.I

Guru Nanak thus replied,—

"The Sound-principle abides in us—though indescribable, yet I find It immanent everywhere,
The Pranas are but rooted in the region of silence, but the Sound-principle is all-pervasive in Its fullness and is self-existent."

—Ram Kali M.I

'Shabd' is the very life of our life. It is a part of our being and we cannot do without It even for a single moment. But we cannot contact It unless we rise above the body consciousness.

"Search for the Sound—the soul essence—in the body, and thou shalt be saved,
By devotion to the Master, I enjoy perpetual peace, for in me is Sound, the crest jewel of all virtues." —Ram Kali M.1

Our human body is just like a receiving set for catching the Sound-current of life, and, like a radio, has to be adjusted properly to bring it in tune with the ethereal waves. The Master, at the time of initiation, connects the spirit within with the lowest link of the all-pervading Sound and this contact can be developed by day to day practice, to any length, one may like.

Sound and light :

In the world there are two things that serve as a guide to the weary traveller on the lonesome journey in the pitch dark night, to wit, Sound and Light (Kalam and Nur). These are the two aids also on the Path of Spirituality, and are very handy and useful. Each of them has its own purpose. We have the divine light in us and from within it emanates Sound and the two together have been described as 'Flaming Sound' or 'Sounding Flame',—

"The mind when attuned with the 'Sound' becomes detatched and gets engrossed,

In the heart of the Light within is a delectable Sound, that makes one fully absorbed in God." —Sorath M.1

The phenomena of Sound and Light are in fact identical, for both result from the ethereal vibrations. Sound comes first but when the vibrations increase manifold and grow in intensity, light is the result. 'Sound' is the 'life-impulse' which is enlivening everything and 'Light' is the 'lighted-impulse' that enlightens our otherwise dark house of the body, and these two constitute the Reality which is beyond the domain of comprehension, though within the possibility of experience.

"Incomprehensible is the real thing."

—Gauri M.5

"Without the Light of 'Shabd, darkness prevails within,
Nor do we get to the Reality, nor end with the gyres." —Majh M.3

"Without Shabd it is all darkness,
With Shabd manifested the world came into being." —Sarang War M.4

All life and all power come from It. From the sun to the candle flame, all light comes from this Grand Power House. The 'energy' of the scientist and the 'pranas' of the yogins are but manifestations of this life-stream while like electricity in the air it is all-pervading and all-powerful.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of man. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not...

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not."

—St. John I: 4-5 & 9-10

St. Augustine, tells us of the manifestation in him of the Light, in this wise,—

"I entered even into my inward self. Thou being my Guide and able as I was; for Thou wert become my helper. And I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul (such as it was), above the same eye of my soul above my mind, the Light Unchangeable. Not this ordinary light which all flesh my look upon, nor as it were a greater of the same kind, as though the brightness of this should be manifold brighter, and with its greatness take up all space. Not such was the light, but other yea, far other from all these...He that knows the Truth, knows what that Light is and he that knows It, knows Eternity."

Sant Kabir tells us that the soul without Shabd is blind and does not know the Path,—

"Without the Word, one is blind and knows not the Way,

With no way out, one endlessly wanders in the gyres."

Thousands of years ago, Zoroaster taught the worship of the cult of Vital Fire and even today we see its traces in the symbolic fire that the Parsis keep burning in their homesteads. Cautam when he became Buddha or the Enlightened One, taught of the Path of Light to his followers.

All the prophets of the East or the West, who practiced the process of inversion and recession or withdrawal of the Soul-current at will, speak of both the experiences of Light and Sound. As soul proceeds on the spiritual path, the gazing faculty precedes that of the hearing, for,—

"Light is faster than sound."

Soul though imprisoned by mind and matter, is yet endowed with the gift of subtle faculties of seeing and hearing independent of the sense organs; and when one develops them both, one can withdraw the life-current from the body and then can move freely on higher spiritual realms, thereby escaping forever from the bondage of the world.

"With the guidance of the gazing faculty, I shall reach Sat Lok." —Sar Bachan

To start with 'Light' appears first and 'Sound' comes afterwards. In practice, we do Simran and Dhyan in the beginning, the reason being that these prepare the ground for further development. Though each has its own individual

purpose, yet both of them are practiced for the advent of 'Sound'. The real help however comes from 'Shabd'. Shabd, then is the control key-stone in the archway of Simran and Dhyan, the two sides of the arch. Again, in the spiritual journey, there come in stages where the soul gets bewildered in the blinding light that descends around It from all sides, and there, nothing but the 'Sound' helps to pull It through. "And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee, Saying this is the Way, walk ye in it.....

—Isiah : 30-14

Again, there are stages on the Way where utter darkness prevails and there are regions of deep silence and solemnity where one is struck with awe and dismay, and there too, the glorious Voice of God comes to the rescue, as an unerring guide and a never failing friend, saying,—

"Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side."

—Everyman

The importance of sound as a guiding factor is recognised at all hands. A traveller through a desolate and dreary plain in the darkness of a dead night with no habitation in sight, anxiously and wistfully tries to catch some sound, the bark of some distant dog wherewith to guide his weary footsteps in the right direction for

the bark announces, to him the proximity of some wayside hutments and encourages him on till he reaches the same; so do beinghted stragglers try to catch the clap-trap of a horse's hoof or the tinkling of a bell round an animal's neck. This is the power of sound, unfailing and deadly sure as it is, It acquires all the more significance in the inner journey of the soul.

Shabd and Truth are Synonymous :

'Shabd is nothing but absolute and abstract Truth in its concrete form. It is an eternal and unchanging principle of God's Power, working out His divine Will, in all directions. Like Truth itself, It was in the beginning where there was naught else, It was the beginning of each cycle of creation and It shall exist forever and forever.

Guru Nanak tells of It, in the Basant Rag, Mohalla I, thus,—

"The 'Word' is the only symbol of Truth,
And can be known and experienced through a perfect Master."

Guru Amar Das and Guru Arjan speak of It, as,—

"'Bani' or Shabd' is Truth personified,
O love this Truth with all your heart and soul."
—Sri Rag M.3

"Listen ye O friend, the all-pervading Voice of God,
The Master has given thee all True Word of God." —Vadhans M 5

Shabd is the Water of Life :

Again, Shabd is the Water of life, that gives us immortality and blesses us with life everlasting,—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying (Word), he shall never see death."

—St. John 8 : 51

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me.....out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

—St. John 7 : 37-38

Once Jesus when passing through Samaria (Sychar) came to Jacobs' well and sat there awhile when a Samarian woman came to draw water and Jesus asked for a drink. But Samarian as she was, she hesitated to deal with a jew, and thereupon Jesus said unto her,—"If thou knowest the gift of God, and who it is that sayeth to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water....."

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

—St. John : IV

In Jeremiah (2 : 13) we have :

"My people have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters."

In Sikh scriptures we have :

"The Word of the Master is an elixir that does away with all desires,
The mind gets dyed in Truth and is forever absorbed in Him." —Sri Rag M.3

Without Shabd the whole world is in stark ignorance, and life goes in vain. It is only a devotee of the Master who gets access to the Water of Life.

"The world is in ignorance of 'Shabd' and life is valueless indeed,
O Nanak ! Shabd alone is the true elixir ; and a devotee of the Master gets it."
—Sorath War M.4

The well of the Water of life lies within us but attached as we are, to the mind, we do not know of It nor partake It. Like a deer with musk hidden in its navel, we search for It without, all our life and die in this attempt.

"Within the body, the Water of life is surging in fullness but the mind-ridden do not taste It ;
With musk in its navel, the deer kills himself in endless search for it without."
—Sorath War M.4

The stream of life is gushing within, and by means of Shabd, one can approach it and partake of the same.

"The fount of the Water of life is bubbling to the brim,

A really athirst, can get to It by following the 'Sound'."
—Wadhans M.3

Shabd is the the Essence of all worship :

Shabd is the essence of all worship and a peerless Johar. All our endeavours and practices are but to achieve 'Shabd'. The devotion to Shabd is acceptable to God, whereby He grants us salvation.

"The devotion is that of the Shabd."
—Majh M.3

"The practice of the Master's Word is the essence of all worship."
—Parbhati M.1

Nothing but the practice of the Shabd leads to the Reality. One cannot, by any means, get out of the world of attachments. In this context, Guru Nanak saith,—

"In this world true devotion is that of Shabd,
Without Shabd, one remains an egoistic fool."
—Parbhati M.1

In the present age—Kaliyuga—the worship that is acceptable to God is that of Shabd.

"In Kaliyuga, communion with the Word is the true *Kirtan*
It is the true devotion by which ye shall escape all I-ness."
—Asa M.3

It is with Shabd that a Jiva is tranformed from clay into gold and from filth into a pure crystal.

"By listening to the Word of the Master, one turns from brittle glass into sterling gold,

By tasting the Word of the Master one is transformed from poison into Nectar."

—Sawai M.4

In this way one reaps the full benefit of his human birth.

"By contact with the True Word, a devotee earns his merit.
The light of the soul dawns within and he lives in perpetual ecstacy."

—Suhi M.3

Shabd is indentical with 'Hukam' and 'Naam'. In fact all these words stand to denote the Godhead or the Power of God.

"He who accepts His 'Will', is acceptable to Him,
With the help of the Master's Shabd, know ye the Naam."

—Basant M.3

Shabd is Soma Ras, very sweet and extremely delicious,—

"sweet is the Word of the Master,
Such an elixir one finds within."

—Parbhati M.1

Shabd is an inexhaustible treasure and ever remains full.

"So long His mercy lasts, the stream of life can never run dry,
O Nanak! Shabd is inexhaustible, distribute it as thou wilt."

—Salok M.5

Shabd is limitless and all-pervading. The angel of death cannot come near it.

"Thou art the Omniscient friend and Thou alone can contact us,
All praise to the Word of the Guru, for It is boundless indeed,
Even the Angel of Death cannot reach where the limitless Word prevails."

—Sri Rag M.1

Shabd is all-pervading and Immanent,—

"The Sun of Shabd illumined all the four ages,
A devotee alone meditates on the Bani."

—Ram Kali M.1

Shabd spreads in its fullness everywhere,—

"Consider not that Hari is far off,
Oh, He is the nearest of the near,
He is ever in attention with eyes and ears,
And doth spread everywhere in fullness."

—Asa M.3

Shabd or Hukam is the Controlling Power of God,—

"Thy Command (Hukam) holds its sway on all sides,
Thy Word (Naam) reverberates everywhere,
Shabd is immanent in all,
The true God meets if Thou so ordaineth."

—Malar M.1

Shabd abides in the holy temple of the body and as such may be delved therein.

"Search for 'Shabd' in the temple of the body,
And get to the precious 'Naam' therein."

—Ram Kali M.3

Shabd can be contacted in the body by a process of inversion and self-analysis,—

"Discipline the body to cross over the ocean of life,
And meditate on the Essence of the soul,
The devotion to the Master grants perpetual ecstacy,
The Shabd of all virtues dwells within, in abundance." —Ram Kali M.1

Guru Nanak tells us of the abode of Shabd, as,—

"Cross over the *Sukhmna* leaving *Ida* and *Pingla* aside to comprehend the In-comprehensible,
Far above these three True Master manifests the Shabd." —Ram Kali M.1

Shabd : How to contact it ?

(1) By the Grace of God : God may, in His mercy, manifest Shabd in whom-so-ever He likes.

"By His glance of Grace, Shabd becomes manifest within, dispelling all scepticism,
The body and the mind both get purified and the pure Sound or Bani (the Naam) is implanted in the heart." —Ram Kali M.1

"None can understand Thee unless Thou doeth it for one,
None can meet Thee unless Thou so decreeth,
Then one sings of the Bani through Shabd all the time,
And remains absorbed in the True One."
—Maru M.3

Those who come within the ambit of His favour, for them Shabd is minted in His true mint and they alone engage in the practice of Naam.

"Only in such a mint, can man be cast into the Word,
But they alone who are favoured by Him, can take unto this Path.
O, Nanak, on whom He looks with grace, He fills with everlasting peace."

—Jap Ji. St. 38

(2) By the grace of Sant Satguru and Sat Sangat: God may in His inimmitable mercy lead one to His accredited representative on earth and the latter links the soul with Shabd, by making Shabd manifest within.

In the fullness of time, He leads one to a Satguru,
Then one takes to the Path of Surat-Shabd Yoga."

—Majh M.3

"The Perfect Master makes the Shabd manifest,
Rising above the three Gunas one rests in Turiya."

—Gauri M.3

"Satgur the greatest Donor manifests the Shabd,
And then all restlessness ceases and one gets eternal rest."

—Gauri M.3

Guru is Word personified, Word made flesh and he alone can make It manifest. It is in fact the gift of the Guru and none else can help in the matter.

"Why hold back what one holds in trust,
There can be no peace until the trust is discharged,
The Word of the Master can be implanted only by the Master,
None else can make the Word manifest."

—Sarang War M.4

Shabd is an unspoken language, emanating of Itself from God and like Him Master imparts the Power of God in an unspoken language. In this context, Maulana Rumi saith,—

"The Master, like God acts without any outer aids,
And imparts knowledge to disciples in an unspoken language."

The Master, at the time of initiation, explains the wondrous and formless Word and then with the lever of His own life-impulse raises the spirit up and contacts the initiate with the Naam.

(3) By complete self surrender at the feet of the Master in all humility after casting away the pride of birth and caste, riches and possessions, and knowledge and wisdom.

"At once rid thyself of the pride of knowledge and penances,
Take a single draught of the intoxicating wine."

—Hafiz

So long as the soil is not ready and the seeds are not sown in season, they do not bear any

fruit. Similarly the mind until it is weeded out of the thorns and thistles of life, it cannot be stilled. It, however, grows gradually domesticated by the practice of the Shabd and in course of time gets rarefied or etherealised and comes to acquire singlemindfulness with the result that the Light of Heaven comes to be reflected therein.

"So long the mind is swayed by passions,
It is full of all kinds of pride and prejudices,
It can neither relish Shabd nor love Naam."

—Sarang War Shalok M.3

So inner cleanliness is more important as compared with the outer one, nay more important than that for without it one can hardly make any progress on the Path.

Devotion to Shabd : What it is ?

To attend to and to listen with a single mind the *Dhun Atmak* Shabd within is devotion of the right type. Shabd is highly subtle and until we rise to the same level of subtlety, we cannot possibly grasp or take hold of the life-line of Shabd. Shabd or the Power of God is all-pervading in all-consciousness and if our spirit, which is of the same essence as of God, gets contact with Shabd, it is a contact with God for God is not different from His Power (Shabd).

"A contact with Shabd is contact with God,
It is the crowning fruition of all endeavours."

—Sri Rag M.3

In order to establish a contact with Shabd, it is but necessary that the soul must first free itself from the prison-house of finitive existence. It is only a perfect Master who can enable her to break through the bondage of mind and matter, to raise her above the body-consciousness and then to link her with the Over-soul—the life of all life—the Naam.

Shabd is the heritage of a rare devotee of the Master :

Everyone wishes to see God face to face but only a rare soul gets the holy communion through the Shabd.

"How many are pining to meet Thee,
A rare soul realises Thee with the Word of the Master." —Basant M.1

This body is the holy temple of God, with God's Power working in and out of it. All persons, rich and poor, lettered and unlettered, young and aged, man or woman, anywhere and everywhere, irrespective of colour, caste and creed, are qualified to have a free access to that Power within through the grace of some competent Master and thus practice Shabd quite easily and naturally and reap the fruit thereof.

"Holy temple of the body is His Emporium with the Shabd (or the divine melodies) beautifully set within,
A devotee of the Master may find the precious Naam (or the holy Word) therein."
—Prabhati M.3

"Without contact with the Shabd, the world remains in delusion and the human life goes in vain,

O Nanak, Shabd is the Water of Life and a rare devotee of the Master gets to It."

A mind-ridden, because of the oscillation of the mind does not recognise the Shabd and remains a total stranger to this elixir.

"The restless mind knows not the Way,
The filthy mind cannot recognise the Word."

—Asa M.1

"A Slave of the senses knows not the Word and loses his self-respect,

And he finds no delight in the Shabd as he remains engaged in the sensual pursuits."

—Sri Rag M.3

Shabd: What it does?

Shabd is all conciousness. It is just a wave in the sea of consciousness. Man is a drop of the Ocean of God, and both are of the same spirit. While one is the Ocean, the other is the wave and the third is a drop of All-conscious God. The wave of conscious 'Shabd' cannot but, like a powerful magnet, attract and draw to itself the conscious drop of the spirit. The spirit finds no rest until riding upon the Sound-current It reaches the heavenly home of the Father and attains Salvation. The sound is surging in its fullness and the spirit needs but contact It to rise above all limitations into the limitless eternity.

Surat and Shabd are naturally related to each other. Shabd is characterised by Light and Sound principles, wherewith the mind gets stilled and the spirit, freed from the clutches of the mind is irresistibly drawn by the Shabd and is taken to her native homestead from where the Sound-current is emanating. On the other hand, those who take up practices involving Pranas, cannot go beyond the frontiers of Pranas which extend to the mental or astral heaven as *Chidakash* is known to be. But a Shabd-yogin can go freely, openly and honourably to wherever he likes, because Shabd pervades everywhere without ever any limitations and reach the true home of his Father.

"My God is everywhere and at all times,
And becomes manifest by practice of Shabd."
—Gujri War M.3

Shabd is the means of finding God. A contact with the Shabd means contact with God.

"A communion with the Word is union with God,
And all endeavours then get crowned with success." —Sri Rag M.3

Shabd is the only way that leads to the True king,—

"In the living soul is the life of life (Shabd),
Which becomes an usher to the great king."
—Sarang War M.4

Shabd is the Way that leads to the Reality. It is a barque that can take the Jiva safely across the sea of matter, to the mansion of the Lord.

The absolute God and the spirit along with Shabd, the connecting link between the two, constitutes the holy trinity, for the same Power of God is working simultaneously in all the three. The spirit in man has no separate existence independent of God.

"O Kabir ! the spirit is of the essence of God."

—Gond Kabir

Though all spirits are of one Reality, yet each one of the spirit feels that it has a separate existence.

Sach Khand or the Kingdom of Heaven is within us but none can enter therein without proper guidance. For admittance thereto, we must invert and have to become a little child in innocence and purity for then we can catch the saving life-line of Shabd which leads Godwards. By communion with Shabd, we are freed from pleasure and pain, mind and matter, and rise above the pairs of opposites, and attain liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

Shabd is the live and conscious life-current of God which has both created the world and is sustaining it. It is the involuted seed that has evolved into a mighty tree laden with many-coloured flowers and fruits. Whatever now exists,

exists in Eternity and whatever goes out of existence also goes into Eternity. Everything is in the great deep, rising momentarily to the surface in the form of tides, waves, ripples, bubbles and the like, appearing and disappearing before our eyes—the Unmanifested, manifesting Himself into so many forms and patterns.

Shabd is the root-cause of the creation and the creation is the resultant effect thereof. All that sprouts from and comes out of the roots is already in the roots in a condensed form and in fulness of time grows and fructifies. When a ray of the sun falls on a polished reflector, it begins to reflect the sun itself. In the same way, when the mind is purified and there is left not a trace of I-ness in it, it begins to reflect God's light from within, just as the ray of the sun is not different from the sun himself so also a spirit which is nothing but a ray of God is not different from God and begins to manifest the hidden power of God, with proper training and guidance in the science of Shabd or Word.

Shabd (Dhun-Atmak) is the true primordial Word, as taught by St. John in his Gospel. He is responsible for creating the various grand divisions, divisions and sub-divisions of the universe right from the highest spiritual region down to the physical world in which we live. Emanating from God, the spirit-current worked

out the the miracle of creation and is sustaining it and controlling it in all details. The practice of the Sound-current, as taught by the Masters in all ages and in all countries, is the highest religion and confers the highest boon, to wit, liberation from the bondage of mind and matter while still living. But contact with Shabd can be established only through the grace of a Master of the Sound current and not otherwise.

Shamas Tabrez, a Muslim devout, thus speaks of Shabd,—

"There comes a Sound (Nida), neither from within nor without,
Neither from right nor left, neither from behind nor in front,
Neither from below nor above, neither from East nor West,
Nor It is of the elements: water, air, fire, earth and the like,
From where then? It is from that place thou art in search of,
Turn ye towards the place wherefrom the Lord makes His appearance.
From where a restless fish out of water, gets water to live in,
From the place where the prophet Moses saw the divine Light,
From the place where the fruits get their ripening influence,

From the place where the stones get transmuted to gems,
From the place to which even an infidel turns in distress,
From the place to which all men turn when they find this world a vale of tears,
It is not given to us to describe such a blessed place,
It is a place where even the hereties would leave off their heresies."

Verily, the Shabd is coming from the direction in which the soul has to go. Without Shabd, the soul remains in darkness and feels helpless.

"Without the aid of Shabd, the soul wanders blindfold in ignorance and knows not the Way-out." —Kabir

All the sages and seers have always counted upon Shabd as the only means of salvation. But one cannot take hold of the life-line of the Sound-current without initiation into the esoteric teachings of the Masters from a competent living Master-soul and practices the process of soul-withdrawal at the still-point in the body between and behind the two eyebrows. This is closing down from the circumference of life to the centre of life and from here the soul with the lead of the Sound-principle, proceeds to her native home, the Mansion of God, the source and fountainhead of the divine melody itself.

Shabd, thus leads us to an altogether new life—life of the spirit as distinguished from the life of the flesh. Christ too taught of this new life which our Christian brethren have forgotten with the lapse of time. St. John, in his Gospel, tells us,—

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth (wisheth), and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell where it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is everyone that is born of the spirit." —3 : 3-8

In Ezekiel, Chapter 36, we have,—

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh."

—Ezekiel 36 : 26-27

This new life of the spirit begins from the day of initiation into the mysteries of the spirit, call it what you like : 'Deekshit', as the

Hindus do 'Baet' as the Muslims say, 'Baptism' as is known among the Christians, and 'Pahul' among the Sikhs. The Vedic seers gave it the name of 'Duey Janama' which literally means second birth. The life of the spirit begins not with the theoretical exposition of the spiritual science but by a practical demonstration on the spiritual plane of the spirit-current made manifest Here the invisible and inaudible life-stream is made both visible and audible to the spirit within, converting the atheist into a theist in the true sense of the term. It is imparting the life-impulse and making it throb in every pore of the body. This coming back of the soul to the realisation of her true nature and rising into Universal or Cosmic awareness beyond the walls of finitude is true resurrection or coming to a new birth and a new life. To die in the body while living, is to live in the spirit.

St. Paul, describes it thus,—

"I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

—Galatians 2 : 20

The life of the flesh and the life of the spirit are entirely two distinct and separate things, exclusive of each other. This is why it is said,—

"He that findeth his life shall lose it : and that loseth his life, shall find it."

—St. Matt. 10 : 39

Guru Nanak speaks of it,—

"The birth in the Master releases one from the cycle of transmigrations." —Ram Kali M.1

Among the Muslims it is called 'Fana-fil-Sheikh' or Death in the Master which is just the same thing as Birth in the Master for this death is but the beginning of a new life.

Shabd thus takes us out of the ignorance which characterised both the mind and matter, purifies us through and through and gives us a new lease of life—the life of the spirit which is unchanging and eternal as one breaks away once for all from the body and bodily attachments, and sees the new world without the help of the outer eyes—

"Communion with the All-pervading Word of the Mater is the highest virtue,
And takes one to his native land to drink the elixir of life and to see the new world without the help of the outer eyes."

—Nut : M.4

The early morning hours are best suited for practice of the Sound-principle for the mind is yet fresh out of sleep and has not yet wandered into the daily routine of the physical life.

"In the early morning hours, commune with the Word leaving aside all attachments,
Nanak would like to be the slave of His slave who engaged in the Word and won what is lost to the world." —Parbhati M.1

"At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn,
Be ye in communion with the divine Word,
And meditate on His glory."

—Jap Ji St. 4

Shabd : Its Blessings

Shabd brings in untold blessings. It is the powerhouse of all energy or force in what-soever form, from Pranas down to electricity and magnetism. Every form of life is the manifestation of Shabd. All that is, is of Shabd and nothing is that is not of Shabd—life current pulsating in and out of space. Those who commune with Shabd and live in and by Shabd are verily the children of the Supreme One, the life of life and the light of light. Shabd is the very 'Bread of Life' which comes down from Heaven for all those who hunger after righteousness and the very 'Water of Life' for those who thirst after Self-knowledge and God-knowledge. True love, wisdom and power are the greatest gifts that one gets by basking in the sunshine of Heaven's Light.

1. Mind grows docile and is purified of the lusts of the flesh : There is no remedy to control the oscillations of the ever-restless mind. One may resort to all the known methods, to wit, penances and austerities, rites and rituals, fasts and vigils, pilgrimages and circumambulations, purificatory baths in the holy rivers, charitable and philanthropic acts, but cannot

thereby achieve inner peace. On the contrary all these and still more, help in developing the egotistic instinct which is the root cause of all evil. Sage Vashisht, while teaching Rama, told him that he could for a moment believe that one had lifted the mighty Himalayas, or had drank the oceanic waters to the lees, but the sage would never believe if any one were to say that he had subdued the mind. But by listening to the Sound-current one is rid of all Karmic impressions of the past. The contact with the Shabd acts as a spark of fire that burns down all impurities of the mind as a heap of hay is burnt down to ashes in an instant. The store-house of unfructified Karmas is blown off like a powder-magazine and once released of this gigantic load, the mind and soul get attuned with the Heavenly Music, lost to the world around, just as a moth before a candle.

Mind runs after pleasurable sensations; most of which fall into two groups: forms and patterns on the one hand and sweet symphonies of sound on the other. The Shabd too has both these characteristics: the heavenly melody and the divine light and once when that Sound or Light principle become manifest, and mind is paralysed, losing all faith in the transitory charms of the world that gradually lose their glamour, grow dull, insipid and lifeless.

With a draught of the Water of Life, the mind grows still for there is no other remedy

to still it but that of communing with the Sound-current.

"Without the Word of the Master, the mind remains restless." —Asa M.1

"Our restless mind becomes steady when engrossed in the Shabd,
And this is the highest worship and the greatest virtue." —Ram Kali M.1

By practice of the Shabd, ripples cease to float on the lake of the mind.

"All the oscillations of the mind cease with the practice of the Shabd and it gets pacified of itself." —Sarang M.3

"Mind keeps running in space—high and low—so long it does not come in contact with the Shabd." —Parbhati M.1

Shabd is sharper than the two-edged razor and cuts asunder all attachments of the world; conquers the five passions and frees one of bondage from all that one holds dear and the spirit when freed, flies unfettered towards her native Home in Heaven.

"Being rid of the five deadly sins, one remains engrossed in the Lord."
—Shalok kabir

2. Shabd is the remedy for egotism from which all the world suffers:

"Egotism is the greatest ill oppressing all,
Without Shabd, one cannot get rid of this malady." —Bhairon M.3

Egotism is an age-old disease but it can be remedied by practice of the Master's Word,—

"Egotism is an age-old disease and its remedy too lies within,
Should the Lord so favour, one takes to the practice of the Master's Word."

—Asa War M.1

"The poison of egotism is rendered ineffective by the Shabd of the Master." —Bhairon M.3

"O Nanak ! Shabd burns away egotism."

—Basant M.1

Shamas Tabrez also prescribes medicine of Shabd to cure one of his egotism.

"When thou shalt hear the trumpet-blast,
Thou shalt be rid of all pride and passions,
When the harmonious sound would fall on thy ears,
Thou shalt be freed from the life of the senses."

3. Shabd brings in inner peace and satiety : Everyone is in a desperate search of peaceful rest and repose, but does not get them. All the comforts of the flesh are but pleasures of an evanescent nature, floating like the clouds in the sky. The pleasurable sensations which do for a while, seemingly appear, are the result of our own fixity of attention and apart from that have no real and independent existence. Our case is like that of a dog who, while munching a lean bone, hurts his mouth, and his own blood trickles down his palate to his tongue, gives him

relish and he is deluded into the belief that all this is from the dry bone.

Spirit or soul is a conscious entity. It cannot possibly derive or get any happiness from inert, material and lifeless things, that is things in which the life-principle is in a dormant or a latent state. It is from the fount of higher consciousness that the spirit can get her food and sustenance. The Sound-current which the Master makes audible is an active life-principle (stream of life) and a contact and communion with It gives the soul, real happiness and bliss.

"The practice of the Master's Word grants immunity from all ailments,
And the devotee of the Master is freed from all sufferings." —Asa M.3

Shabd, has exhilarating and exulting influence which charms the body and mind, both of which acquire ineffable serenity.

"The fires of lusts play havoc within but the Master lets in a stream of refreshing Music,
Hearing which the body and the mind feel blessed and are saved from all maladies.
—Kalyan M.4

"The Master's Word is an ocean of serenity,
It is the Path of salvation and destroys all egotism." —Malar M.1

When a soul contacts 'Shabd', it gets saturated in the Power of God and feels truly blessed.

"The contact of Shabd with soul produces joy supreme,
A dip in the Power of God gives true happiness."
—Sri Rag M.1

The practice of 'Shabd' leads to eternal bliss that ever grows from height to height.

"Day and night, an unceassing bliss descends,
When one remains devoted to the great Word."
—Malar M.4

"The Word of the Master is a source of great happiness,
Blessed indeed is the bride (soul) that lives saturated with love of the Beloved."
—Asa M.5

4. In the Sikh scriptures, one reads of innumerable benefits that accrue from Shabd.

Shabd kills, root and branch, all longings and desires, mental vibrations and subtle attachments :

"Shabd extinguishes the fires of desires,
And quietly drives away all delusions."
—Gauri M.1

"Shabd singes all aspirations and cravings,
And one remains attuned with the Lord."
—Asa M.1

"Shabd burns down all material longings and attachments,
The body and the mind live in eternal peace in love of the Master. —Basant M.3

When once the life-stream becomes audible,

one never feels lonely; for he hears its reverberations wherever he may be, at home or abroad. The Voice of God keeps reminding him of the true home of his Father. The practice of the Sound-principle rids one of all troubles and afflictions, the five deadly passions, the lusts of the flesh and of the mind, leaving the soul in pristine transparency, detached from all that is of the world and worldly. Shabd is the supporting staff both in the journey of this life and of the life hereafter. With the experience of transcension beyond the confines of the body, he becomes fearless of death and when the alloted span of worldly existence comes to an end, he throws off, once for all the mortal coils of the flesh, as easily and happily as one does his old and worn off garments, and is freed from the cycle of births and deaths and goes openly and honourably to his home in heaven.

The practice of and the communion with the Word brings in the heaven's light and one feels divinely blessed. It gives intuitive knowledge of the self and of God and one experiences within himself the integral realisation of the soul, as one common life-principle extending everywhere, in and around him, without any barriers and limitations of time and space, for all life is one, from eternity to eternity irrespective of so many forms and patterns through which it may manifest. The moment one rises

into the Timeless, he himself becomes timeless. This in fact is true meditation and true devotion leading to the true love of God and His creation, his own self expanding and coinciding with that of his Creator. This is Jeavan-mukti or salvation while living in the world, like a lotus flower, above and aloft in the muddy pool in which it stands, unaffected by the dirt or squalor of the water below. Woe betide those who do not get contact with 'Shabd' for they ever remain between the mill-stones of God's negative power and endlessly go up and down in the giant wheel of the creation, according to the merit and demerit of their Karmas whatever they be. Born in the gyres, they come and go in the gyres, with no way to escape until they contact some Master of the Word, who may lead them to the Path of the Word, the Way-out and bring about their salvation.

The waters of life (Hauz-i-Kausor or Prag Raj) lie hidden in the deepest depths of the soul and the way thereto lies in utter silence through the Word. As we live in the hustle and bustle of life, we, if at all, try for it, we try to seek it, like other things, without us and miserably fail in the endeavour. But those who search for it the right way and are put on the Path, by some competent Word incarnate, may drink of this elixir and taste of this manna and gain immortality.

"I am the 'bread of life' : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...

I am the 'living bread' which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." —John 6 : 35 & 51

"Who-so-ever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John : 4 : 14

To sum up the whole thing in a few words, we may say,—

"Word is the panacea for all ills." —Gauri M.5

Shabd: Anhad (Limitless) or Anahat (Self-Existing)

Shabd is of two kind: Ahat and Anahat. 'Ahat' is that sound which is produced when two or more things contact each other. All the outer sounds, all the world over, fall in this category. 'Anahat' is that sound which does not depend on 'hat' or contact of two or more things, nay it does not depend on anything what-so-ever. The Mohammedan devouts call it 'Anhad', meaning unceasing, eternal or limitless, as the term literally means. Shah Niaz speaks of it, thus,—

"Hear thou one continuous and un-ending Music,
A music that is eternal and beyond the confines of death."

Again,—

"When It has no beginning and no end,
It is therefore called Anhad or endless."

The Absolute Truth is both imageless and soundless for all images and sounds lie dormant in that state of complete fullness within the eternal seed :

"He is the Ruling Power over all that exists,
The unstruck Music too is His manifestation."

—Sorath M.5

"With no form and no lineaments, His Music doth flow ceaselessly,
Shabd or the Sound-current is the creative life-principle of the Immaculate One." —Asa M.1

In the Shabd there is light giving rise to music,—

"Sit steadily in the cave of the mind and then shalt thou witness the sounding fire within."

—Asa M.5

"There the unending melodies float,
And the mind drinks the nectar thereof."

—Ram Kali M.1

This 'Anhat Dhun' (Self-existing music) is going on all the time and is eternally endless :

"The self-existing music is eternal and continuous,
Be ye saturated in the ineffable sweetness of the Sound current." —Jaitsri M.1

"Night and day the ceaseless strains float adown." —Ram Kali M.1

The melodious strains of the unceasing music are ineffably sweet and charming:

"Countless are the notes in the unending Melody,
The charming sweetness whereof is ineffable indeed."
—Sarang M.5

Innumerable are melodies that are going on before the Court of God:

"The sorrows and afflictions of the ages are blown away,
The endless Music plays continuously at His Court."
—Bhairon M.5

"What there is to indicate the abode of God,
There plays the heavenly Music all the time."
—Ram Kali M.1

This Limitless Song is going on in the heart of all things:

"The all-pervading Music is going on everywhere,
In the heart of all, the Divine Music flows."
—Vadhans M.5

"Its reverberations are heard in the Gaggan,
And charmingly sweet is the eternal Music."
—Ram Kali M.1

One can contact the Heavenly Music, only when he transcends the body-consciousness:

"When the soul currents withdraw from the sensory plane in the nine outlets and get concentrated at the still-point in the body in the tenth door at the back of the eyes,

It is only then that one, with the guidance of the Master, is able to contact the heavenly music that plays interminably." —Majh M.3

"Close thy outgoing faculties,
And hear the eternal Melody." —Sorath Kabir

Bhai Gurdas Ji says thus,—

"When the soul is absorbed in the Word,
It gets lost in the sublime Music."

—War: 19 Pauri 8

"When the soul is engrossed in the Word,
The unending Music floats adown."

—War: 19 Pauri 21

The communion with the Anhad Shabd is the only source of perfect knowledge, true devotion and the endless song that glorifies God and Man,—

"For perfect knowledge and devotion and the story of great God,
Listen ye ever to the Anhad which is the food of the devotees and destroys all their fear."

—Suhi M.5

Anhad Shabd can be contacted beyond the plane of the senses and none can reach It by his own unaided efforts, without the grace and guidance of the true Master. Its manifestation comes as a pure gift from the Master (Gur-Parsad)

"Anhad Shabd is very exhilarating,
But one gets to It by the Master's grace."

—Sri Rag M.1

"O Nanak! one who has an access to a perfect Master,
He alone is enabled to contact the eternal Music." Asa M.5

The Anhat Shabd is the only way that leads to God and one begins to relish and enjoy God-intoxication only after the eternal Song is manifested within.

"The eternal Song becoming manifest within, one is united with the beloved,
The lowly Nanak is now in perfect bliss, for he has found the merciful Lord." —Gauri M.5

It is only a devotee of the Master in whom the divine eternal Melody may become manifest. The worldly wise cannot reach to It.

"The Creator has ordained it as a fundamental law,
The eternal Song can be heard through communion with the Word,
It is made manifest in the devotee of the Master and in none else,
In the mightly swirl of the mind one forgets It and the God-man reminds of It,
This Law has been in operation throughout the ages." —Bhairon M.3

With the practice of the eternal Sound-current, one is purified of all sins and lusts and is washed clean of the karmic impressions of all the previous births, and with the light of Self-knowledge and God-knowledge, he rises into

Universal Consciousness and becomes the knower of Brahm and Par Brahm and reaches even far beyond into the kingdom of God, his eternal heritage. The 'Lost Word' comes back to light and life only through the grace of a competent Master, as a free gift, to whom-so-ever He may choose to grant.

Panch Shabd
or
The Five Melodies

The unending strains of Music are of a variety of types, and become manifest through a competent Master :

"Various are the unending dulcet melodies,
One cannot describe their delicious strains."

—Sarang M.1

Bhai Gurdas Ji tells us, in this context,—

"By listening to the countless strains of the limitless song, one is struck with ineffable wonder." —War : 13

Out of these, only five melodies are considered of immense value, and the scriptures speak highly of them,—

"The five-sounded Melody keeps reverberating and my soul is ever attracted by It as a *Sarang* is ever after water.
O the Formless One beyond all ken ! I worship thee with all my heart." —Parbhati Kabir

"The five sublime melodies become manifest through the grace of the Master,

And a rare soul gets attached to them."

—Kanra War 4

"The five sublime strains become distinguishable,
The drum, the conch, and the thunder."

—Ramkali Beni Ji

As these five melodies proceed from God's throne, God is described in the scriptures as 'Panch Shabdi' (i.e. Lord of the five-sounded Melody).

"The glorious consummation takes place,
When the Lord of the five Melodies comes."

—Suhi M.I

The five melodies constituting the Word come from Him and become the means of reuniting us with Him. The saints also adore the Word, for in the Jap Ji, St. 19, we have,—

"The saint lives by and meditates on the One Word." —Jap Ji St. 16

Bhai Gur Das Ji tells us that it is only after one transcends the body-consciousness, one gets contact with the five-sounded Song.

"When the spirit crosses over the world of matter,
The five-sounded Melody comes to greet her."

—War : 29

It is only a rare devotee of the Master that practices the five Melodies and thereby reaches the kingdom of God,—

"The soul of a true devotee can listen to the five-sounded Music,

The Song of the Master is characterised by five distinct strains." —Bhai Gurdas War 6

"God Himself dwells in the five Sounds,
And the five Sounds give a clue of Him."

—War : 7, Pauri 5

All the saints and sages have ever taught of the five Sounds. Hafiz, a great mystic poet, speaks of the five Naubats :

"Be attentive and listen to the five drum-beats, coming adown from the high heaven ;
The heaven that lies beyond the six gangalionic centres and is far above the seven skies."

The teachings of Shams Tabrez, as well, centered round the five-sounded Melody,—

"Every day the five drums play at His door to announce His greatness,
If their Music were to fall on thy ears, thou shalt be rid of all thy I-ness."

Again, the saint tells us that one can hear the five melodious tunes only when one gets up his tabernacle in the seventh region (i.e. rises above the six *Chakras* of the *Pind* and comes up to the first astral plane, behind and between the two eye-brows).

"Thou shalt meet the five Naubats in the seventh region ;
As soon as you take your bivouac far above the six planes."

The audible Sound-current is in fact only one continuous creative life-principle which emanating

from the Immaculately Pure One steps down from plane to plane for the purposes of creating five regions below: pure conscious, great causal, causal, subtle and physical and as It passes through varying degree of density, peculiar at each place, It acquires a distinctive sound and hence has come to be known as Music of the five melodies or tunes. There or two distinct sounds upto Trikuti and two more are added up to Sach Khand and the fifth tune is that of Sat Lok. In Sat Lok, all the five melodies are completed in their fullness and richness. The mystery of the Sound-principle is revealed by some Sound-incarnate Master and it is by practice of and communion with the five-melodies, that the soul is gradually led to the Lord of the five-tuned Music.

"It is by the Grace of the Master that one devotes himself whole heartedly to this practice,
And meets the All-Merciful. by hearing to the five Shabdas." —Bhairon M.3

All the five Sounds are characterised by a delectable harmony and whosoever concentrating his spirit current recedes back and rises above the body-consciousness, is sure enough to meet them.

"In the temple of the body who-so-ever sings and sings of the Lord,

He, while singing, hears the five Melodies in the body and gets the highest glory."

—Sarang M.4

In the scriptures, it is said that the reverberation of these tunes becomes manifest in the forehead,—

"For ages past, I have been Thy devotee; how can I now be separated?
The harmony playing at Thy door, becomes manifest in my forehead." —Ram Kali Kabir

Where then is this harmony to be located? In which part of the forehead? This harmony can be traced between and behind the forehead in the Sukhmana and one can hear it only over there.

"Listen thou to the divine Music in the Sukhman,
Attend ye to it with all attention."

—Malar War M.1

The Muslim divines and darveshes have spoken of it as Shah-rag and the Mehrab, meaning thereby life-chord in the great archway of of heaven (i.e. forehead).

"When in meditation I visualise Thy beloved form, O Master!
A great Harmony (Sound) springs up in the central archstone of my forehead." —Hafiz

Buleh Shah saith,—

"God is much nearer than even the life-chord."

In Quran, it is said,—

"I am nearer to thee than thy life-line."

Those who practice the Surat-Shabd Yoga under the guidance of a competent Master, begin to unravel the mystery of self and of God and begin to see the All-pervading Truth both within and without. Secondly, from the varying sounds, he learns at what region he is in his spiritual journey for the serve as milestones on the Path and thus save him from wandering astray.

"And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee, saying this is the Way, walk ye in It, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." —Isiah 30 : 21

One can find his way to the five Melodies from a competent Master and by practicing His Word.

"The five Sounds become audible by following the instruction of the Master,
A person with a mighty good fortune can hear the Limitless Sound Principle."

—Kanra War M.4

A detailed description of the five Sounds relevant to the five regions, is given by the Sant Satguru at the time of initiation and the disciple as he advances in practice, verifies the truth of the Master's words, as he moves forward from plane to plane.

Blessed indeed is the temple of the body in which the five Sounds become audible and the Way to God opens up.

"Fortunate is the house the body where the five Sounded Word becomes manifest,
Blessed indeed is the sacred house which stands by It." —Ramkali M.3

One hears the five Melodies only through the grace of God and no one has any say in this matter.

"The wondrous Music of the five melodies,
God Himself may make audible if He so wisheth." —Maru M.1

"The five Shabds peel continuously, and overflow in their fullness,
Peerless are the five Sounds and unceasingly do they sport about."
—Bhai Gurdas War 3

"Five Sounds do make the perfect Harmony,
And the limitless Song, brings in wondrous intoxication." —Ramkali M.5

"The unending Melody is ever rich in Its fullness." —Ramkali Kabit

The five symphonies combine together to make the subtle Word perfect which lulls the mind to sleep forever and frees the soul from the trigunatmac bondage, never to return to the cycle of births and deaths.

"Learn from the saints to live in harmony with the sublime Word,
The Word made perfect by the five symphonies constituting the same."
—Bhai Gurdas : War 6

"Now that One Word abides in me,
There can be no more coming into the world."
—Bilawal M.1

"My Beloved has taken me beyond the three Gunas,
And I remain ever absorbed in the sublime Word." Sri Rag M.3

"Day and night I live in perfect bliss,
Attuned as I am with the Word." —Malar 4

Those who live in tune with the One Word are worthy of our highest esteem and adoration :

"O Nanak ! they deserve the greatest homage,
Who live in harmony with the Word."
—Ramkali M.1

Musical Melodies Within

The primordial form of the Lord is the Sound-principle, and myriads of tunes are playing at His door, all the time:

"Fortunate I am to have the Lord as my friend and companion,
For endless symphonies keep playing at His door." —Bilawal M.5

It is through Shabd that the creation came into being, with its various divisions and sub-divisions. Each division has its own peculiar musical notes which one hears as one rises from one higher plane to another. All the saints have given detailed account of these Sounds and in Gurbani particularly we have an elaborate exposition on the subject.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the Hindus as they visit a temple strike the big bells hanging over the doorway. The Christian churches are invariably provided with a belfry and the bell is pulled at by the bell ringer before the commencement of the church service. In the earlier Sikh temples either a conch was blown or a gong was struck at, though this has now been replaced by playing a big drum (Nakara). A careful research on the subject reveals that all these outer things, viz bells, gongs, conches, etc. are but symbolic representations without, of the inner Sound-principle. Again, a careful study of the structure of all these places of worship, also helps us to understand a significant religious element involved therein. Hindu temples have a dome-like shape with a big saucer-shaped bell hanging from the centre of the dome and whoever goes in for worship, first clangs the bell. In the temple of the human body also, in the dome-like structure of the head, the pilgrim soul as it enters the astral region, hears a sound that resembles that of a gong or a conch. Similarly the Christian Cathedrals are either in the formation of a big dome resembling the human head or are steeple-shaped, reminiscent of the ascending human nose, over which, as the soul concentrates at the still-point behind and between the two eye-brows, a bell-like sound is heard. Khawaja Hafiz,

a mystic poet, of great repute, also speaks of it, thus :

"None knows where my beloved abides,
But sure enough comes the sound of bell therefrom."

In Sikh scriptures it is stated :

"The Sound of the gong is heard everywhere."

—Asa M.5

The Buddhistic monasteries are also dome-shaped and are always embellished with two drums: one on the right and the other on left. The scriptures of all the religions contain references to the ringing sound of bells or the blowing of horns and conches : the reason being that this is the first experience of the soul as it rises above the body-consciousness and enters the temple of the Most High, the way whereto begins from the root of the nose behind the two eye-brows. In the same way countless melodies greet the soul as it proceeds onwards on the Path ; but five of them are generally considered and accepted as of immense value in leading and guiding one, on journey God-wards. These melodious tunes interchangeably lead from plane to plane until one catching the native melody reaches the Home of his Father, with the proper help and guidance of some Master-saint.

In the Wars of Bhai Gurdas, one comes across many references, in this context,—

"The soul hears the playing of Singhi (Zither)."
—War 20: Pauri 11

"The unending Music plays and the Light of Toor appears." —War 23 : Pauri 13

"In the silence of the soul there is effulgent light,
Be ye absorbed in the sweet exhilarating Music."
—Kabit 222

Hafiz saith :

"Listen ye to the heavenly orchestra,
With notes of dulcimar, flute, zither and guitar."

These inner musical notes, which can be contacted by a Master, help in liberating the soul from the walls of finitude and take her up to the high home of the Father—the kingdom of God, for that is the only Highway and none else.

Musical Melodies Without

We see it in our everyday experience that music : instrumental or vocal plays an important role in religious congregations, whatever the nature; may be of the Yogins, the Hindus, the Christians or the Sikhs. We see the practice of Qawwali among the muslims, the rich Music in the quatrains of Omar Khayyam, in the poetical compositions of Shah Niaz, Khawja Hafiz, Shams Tabrez and Maulana Rumi. All the teachings of the Sikh Masters in the voluminous Granth Sahib are arranged on Rag forms.

The fact is that effusions from the depths of one's soul flow in unpremeditated numbers. Poetry is, in fact, the language of the soul, as much as prose is of the intellect. All these outer musical aids have, however, an inebriating effect that lull a person to a state of intoxication but cannot rouse in him Super-consciousness gradually expanding into the efflorescence of Universal Awakening and Cosmic Awareness.

"All the wild ecstatic dances in accompaniment with the outer music are of no avail to the mind that is both blind and deaf." —Asa M.3

For this in-effectiveness, there are several reasons. In the first place the music that one very often hears is not an out-pouring of the soul. It is a cheap commodity and merely as the means of livelihood.

"A musician makes use of his tunes for the sake of earning a living
And makes all sorts of gesticulations, waving himself from side to side.
With rattling ripplets at the ankles, one calls himself a devotee of Ramdas and thereby earns a living,
And another shows himself off with the observance of fasts, vigils and performance of set rituals,
And still another sings out hymns and verses with a mind an utter stranger thereto."

—Maru M.5

With the dog of hunger gnawing at the very vital chords within, one cannot possibly get over his sense of doubt and scepticism with the result that one remains in darkness, far removed from the Reality.

Secondly, most of the musicians spend all their time and energy in setting right the tunes and strains of their instruments, vocal or otherwise. A searching enquiry from some of the *Ragis* (professional singers) revealed that they live in constant fear of losing their grip of popular tunes and thus always try to show off what they may or may not actually possess. With the attention rivetted all the time on the tunes alone they simply sing off the Bani regardless of its true import and thereby not only lose sight of the inner meaning it conveys but more often than not, make such phonetical blunders that the true significance itself is distorted and lost.

"The yogin plays the part with his hands,
But the tunes do not ring in true." —Asa M.4

Again, the hearers too cannot understand the verses properly unless they are well acquainted with it beforehand or else they lose it in the strains and tunes of the accompanying music. The saints have, therefore, not attached any special importance to outer music for it fails to develop true concentration and consequently one cannot contact the Reality within

nor can one lose the sense of I-ness and get above the body-consciousness nor can achieve inner peace and ecstacy.

"O Yogin, with the Music of the zither you cannot develop concentration nor reach the Truth,

O Yogin, your zither shall not give you inner peace nor shall it rid you of your egotism."

—Ramkali M.3

The time spent in preparing tunes and strains is a dead loss without any yield what-so-ever. If this time were spent in attuning the soul with the inner Word, according to the instructions of the Master, one could gather a lot of untold treasures of Divinity.

"How long will you adjust to play the ripplets and the guitar?

Why not spend the time in the Word instead of in preparing the tunes.

How long will you dance and extend your hands?" —Asa M.4

It is no good to emotionalise oneself, and to sing and dance wildly to the accompaniment of music, to tire oneself out of breath and then to faint away, which is nothing but sinking into oblivion that leads the spirit nowhere. The outer musical aids, no doubt, for a while, do help in gathering in the scattered outgoing faculties and wandering wits but cannot take one to a place from where there be

a Way-out to some higher consciousness. On the other hand, this takes one to a state of forgetfulness both of one's self and of God. Beethoven tells us that music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life. We seem to enter into a new mental world of our own which, of course, is superimposed on us by the musicians. But it fails to wean the mind from the inner cravings for the world and all that is worldly. In brief, the teaching of the Masters are crystal-clear on this subject. We may be attracted by and get obsorbed in the outer music and all of us fully enjoy it, yet with all that we cannot break loose from the three Gunas and transcend into the beyond. Without the aid of the True Music of the soul that is going on everywhere and all the time, one remains a constant prey to sorrow and affliction in the realm of mind and matter.

"Engaged in useless Pursuits the musician keeps the people spell-bound in Ragas,
He remains within the snares of three Gunas and goes round in transmigration,
As without contact with the All-pervading Word, one remains in suffering and sin."

Ramkali M.1

"It is only the Word that can take one out of the delusive matter." —Maru M.3

The saints have therefore never recommended any course of outer discipline; may be of

music, yogic practices or of anything else. They have always laid stress on the love of Naam or Word, the primal Sound-principle of God-head.

"Some engage in the music of the bells,
Some in fasts, vigils, beads and the like,
Some smear their bodies with sandal paste,
But I have only the Lord for my devotion."

—Ramkali M.5

The Muslim devouts also preferred the practice of Kalam-i-qadim or the most ancient inner call of God to all kinds of outer musical melodies.

"Take the stop-cock of doubt and distrust from your ears,
And listen to the Melody that is floating adown from above.
O brave soul, rise above the sensory plane,
And hear thou the Heaven's Music.
What a pity to remain in the prison-house of the body,
And not to listen to the Voice of the All-merciful."

Bhai Gurdas, in his Kabit Sawais, tells us that by 'Nad-Bad' (outer ragas and raginis—tunes and melodies), one cannot have access to the True and unending Melodies.

"So long one enjoys rags and raginis,
He remains far removed from Anhad."—No. 12

The rags and raginis (musical notes) have

just a sensual appeal and one engaged in them remains entangled all his life and is noosed in unawares like a swift-footed stag or a mighty elephant both of whom, in their ignorance, fall an easy prey to the wiles of the hunters.

"Just as a stag by listening to the music of the drum gets drenched in ignorance,
So man without Shabd does not get peace and happiness." —No. 412

Far beyond 'Nad-bad' (outward music) lies the Anhat or the unstruck self-supporting Music :

"One has to go far beyond the musical tunes for union with the Anhad. —No. 11

It is only by communion with the Anhad, that one can rise above the phycical plane of the three Gunas. This Godly Music helps us in breaking through the bondage of the world and we, while remaining in the world, cease to be of the world. Henceforth, we like a lotus flower, keep above the muddy water which is our natural habitat and like a sea-fowl do always keep high and dry unaffected by the natural element in which we live.

In the Sikh scriptures, the 'Nad-bad' has often been described as 'Bikh-bani' or 'Bikh-nad' meaning thereby Bani or Nad with a mortal sting in it, for it injects one with a deadly poison from which one can find no escape.

"Through palate and the eyes we are all entangled,

And we get deadly poison through the ears,
Without the Shabd we are lost all the time."

—Gauri M.1

"The ears get so tuned with the false music,
That the Music of God does not appeal us."

—Suhi M.5

It is only by substituting the 'Nad-bad' with the Divine Melody that we can have any honour in His presence :

"Leave off *Ragas* (outer music) and commune with the Word,
Then shalt thou be honoured in His court,
O Nanak ! by meditating on Him according to the instructions of the Master, one rids himself of all vanities." —Bilawal War M.4

The worldly-wise keep busy all the time in 'Nad-bad' which is nothing but sound arising from matter :

"O Man ! how shall I describe all this ?
It is all but a false rattle from matter."

—Gauri M.5

The path of the Masters starts where all these *ragas and raginis* (musical notes and tunes) come to an end and one transcends the plane of the senses, beyond which the unstruck music ceaselessly plays of itself. One who is in tune with this Dhun-atmak Shabd (song of the Soul), may sing as much as he likes and it befits him to do so,—

"He who has seen the Reality,

His songs are acceptable, and,
He is honoured in His Court." —Suhi M.4

It is only by contact with the Word that one can escape from the sea of delusive matter and the rest, i.e. outer musical notes of whatever description, are all of no avail.

"The mind keeps oscillating when sitting in devotion,
But by listening to the Master's Word it gets stilled,
The True Sound drives away all worldly attachments,
The Shabd opens the eye to Reality." —Majh M.3

"While engaged in sinful pursuits one sings Ragas (songs) and bears testimony to the truth of what they say, little knowing that without the Word all is a farce." —Asa M.1

The inner music of the soul is the real song. Its tunes are self-existing and self-supporting for they need no outer aids of hands, feet, tongue and the like and lead to the source from whence they come—the Minstrel divine :

"The sweet symphonies of the Music float without the aid of hands and feet,
Who-so-ever communes with this Music, he beholds the Truth." —Asa M.1

The strains of the Heavenly Music become manifest only unto one who is a true devotee of the Master and through a Master-soul many get benefited :

"A devotee of the Lord sees and sings of His glory,
He hears the playing of cymbals, bells, zither, guitar and the flute,
He surrenders his all unto Him and gets to the Truth,
Whosoever believes in Him, gets on the Path and ends his round of births,
He doth escape the fires of hell, O Nanak! and truly comes to his own." —Asa M.5

The Yogins and Derveshes, however, make use of the outer music as an aid in developing the Transcendental Hearing. "The Sufis, in particular, call music a divine or celestial art, not only because of its use in religion and devotion, and because it is in itself an universal religion, but because of its fineness in comparison with all other arts and sciences. Every Sacred Scripture, Holy picture or spoken word produces the impression of its identity and leaves its own image upon the mirror of the soul; but music stands before the soul without producing any impression whatever of either name or form of the objective world, thus preparing the soul to realise the Infinite...

The Sufi recognising its importance, calls music 'Ghiza-i-Ruh', the food of the soul and uses it as a source of spiritual perfection; for music fans the fire of the heart and the flame arising from it illumines the soul. The yogis

and ascetics blow *Narsinghas* (big horned instruments) or *Shankha* (a conch or a big shell), to awaken in them the inner tone. Derveshes play *Nai* or *Algoza* (a double flute), for the same purpose. The bells and gongs in the churches and temples are meant to suggest to the thinker the same sacred sound; and thus lead him towards the inner life."

—Mysticism of Sound

The music used as an art of arts and the science of sciences, containing the fountain of all knowledge is helpful in developing the finer sense of hearing; but if practiced for exhibition and show or as a means of earning a living, it loses its inherent charm and real utility.

The saints, at times, press music into their service as a handy aid in collecting an audience, for people are generally attracted more by music than by anything else.

Again, it is out of the abundance of heart that a man speaketh. As the true saints are imbued with the intoxication of the inner unstruck (Anahat) divine Music, the spontaneous songs welling out of the depths of their soul bring about a tremendous impact on the listeners and at times, transform their very being instantaneously leading them to full spiritual efflorescence.

From a study of ancient tradition we see that the first divine messages were given in

songs ; as is evidenced from the Songs of Solomon, the Psalms of David, the Gathas of Zoroaster. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Ramayan, the Mahabharta and the Zend Avesta, Kabala and the Sikh Scriptures are all in verse. The saints like Kabir, Nanak, Baba Farid, Hazrat Bahu, Surdas, Dharamdas, Sadna and others mostly made use of verse for disseminating their ideas. The very atmosphere in the gatherings of the saints is charged with spiritual vibrations and often some of the devout listeners get into *Wajd* or a state of intoxication at their very sight. The two simple words 'Hari Bole' addressed to a washerman, by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the sage of Bengal, turned the very washing ghat into a veritable ring of dancers with the chant of 'Hari Bole' on their lips. This then is the power of real music coming from within the secret chambers of the heart.

III

AMRIT

Nectar or the Water of life

"AMRIT"

(Nectar or the Water of Life)

'Amrit' or 'Aab-i-Hayat' or Maha Ras' is the elixir of life, for whosoever partakes of it, gets everlasting life, and escapes, once for all, from the otherwise interminable round of births and deaths. The sages and the seers wandered in quest of It, up hills and down dales, through burning desert-sands and snow-capped mountains, and visiting the sacred pools of water and rivers, but nowhere, were they able to find It in the wide world inspite of all their labour. Is this then a mere Chimera or Mirage, a wild-goose-chase or a will-O'-the-wisp, Ignis-fatuus or a figment of the human brain ? The saints in reply have repeatedly said :

" 'Amrit' is something real and solid, It is the Water of Immortality, which lies hid and buried within the deepest depths of the soul, encrusted with the dust of ages, and may be delved into, even now and rediscovered if one has the patience to do, as he is bidden."

In the scriptures of the various religions, we come across references to the sacred Water of Life. The Muslim divines describe It as 'Aab-i-Haiwan' or 'Aab-i-Hayat' and always suggested

Its use to the world-weary pilgrims. This is also called as ' Chashma-i-Kausar.' The Hindu scriptures call it 'Mansarover' or the Pool of Nectar (Amritsar), which, if tasted, would grant life everlasting. In Vedas, we read of It as 'Soma Ras,' that granted Cosmic Awareness or Universal Consciousness to the Rishis and the Munis who partook of It in ages long ago. The saints generally call It 'Amritsar' or 'the Pool or the fount of Nectar'. Christ often spoke of It, as 'the Water of Life'.

"And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely." —Rev. 22 : 7

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

—John 4 : 14

In the holy Bible, it is stated that Christ used to bring the dead to life. At one place, he admitted having administered this Water of Life to a Samarian lady. From all these, it is abundantly clear that Christ freely made use of this 'Water of Life' in treating the ills of mankind. And very often along with It he took recourse to the 'Voice of God', as well.

"For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." —I Corinthians 15 : 52

"When the dead shall hear the Voice of God: and they that hear shall live." —John 5 : 25

By these means, he is said to have redeemed no less than hundred forty and four thousand souls. (Rev. 14 : 3)

The Rishis and Munis or the holy men of old and even the saints in comparatively recent times tasted of the Water or Life and made their followers drink from the great fountain-head and it is possible even to-day to partake of this Water with the grace and kindness of some Master Saint.

Amrit : What It is?

From a careful study of the scriptures, we learn that the Water of Life or the Nectar is nothing but the 'Word' or 'Logos' of Christ; 'Naam' or 'Shabd' of the saints, 'Kalma' of the Muslims, and 'Nad' of the Vedic Rishis.

"Amrit is the True Naam (or Word),
But It cannot be described in words.
He who tastes of It is accepted at His Court by attuning with the Word." —Sri Rag M.3

"O dear self, Amrit is the Hari Naam,
And one gets access to It through a Master-soul."
—Bihagra M.4

"The Word of God is an elixir of life and is a panacea for all the ills of the world,
Bhikhan saith It is with the Grace of the Guru that one finds a Way to Salvation."
—Sorath Bhikhan

"Master's Word is pure ambrosia,
A draught of It quenches all thirst."
—Malar War M.3

"The Treasure of the Word is the Water of Life (Amrit),
Drink ye all brothers to your heart's fill."
—Gauri War M.5

"The Way to the Nectarian treasure of Word (Truth) one finds through a saint,
Blessed are the saints who are ever devotedly in tune with It." —Ram. War M.5

"Amrit becomes manifest by devotion to the Master,
O Nanak ! Shabd is the Nectar of Life,
And a rare devotee of the Master partakes of It." —Sorath War M.4

"The limitless Song (Anhad Bani) has an ambrosial effect,
It lulls both the body and the mind to a quiet repose." —Majh M.5

"O Thou who manifesteth within, the elixir of Bani, I make an offering of myself to Thee,
For Thou hast implanted in me the Amrit Bani (Word) and I remain absorbed in the holy Naam." —Majh M.3

"O God ! wonderful are Thy ways and means,
The mind in the gyres can hardly understand them.
Thou hast attuned it with the delectable (Amrit) Bani,

And the immortal ambrosial Word (Shabd) is now fully manifest." —Majh M.3

"Those who are proud of Thy Naam are completely saturated with the same,
O Nanak ! there is but one Amrit (Nectar) and none besides It." —Sarang War M.2

"The Naam of Hari is the elixir and a draught of It makes one contented.
O Nanak ! he who drinks of It escapes all delusion." —Malar War M.3

"Whoever deal in the wealth of Naam,
They live on the everlasting manna of life."
—Gauri War M.5

"The Word of the Master is extremely sweet,
Such an elixir one finds within,
Whosoever tastes of It, gets perfected,
O Nanak ! such a one remains in perpetual bliss." —Parbhati M.1

"The Word of the Master is the Water of Life,
To quaf It is to quench all thirst.
The mind verily gets drenched in Truth,
And always remains absorbed in Truth."
—Sri Rag M.3

One is swayed by passions and desires so long he peeps not into the Beyond, but Shabd extinguishes all desires when the mind takes its fill of nectar.

Amrit is synonym with Truth and Bani,—

"The riches of Word (Truth), one gets through the grace of a Master,

Blessed are the saints who are ever in tune with It." —Ramkali War M.5

Amrit is often used for Hari (God), Hari Kirtan (the divine song) and Maha Ras (the exhilarating vintage). He alone gets out of desires who engages in the Word. Hari is the fruit of the Tree of Life (Amrit-phal) and is a gift from God.

"False are all the designs and colours as we see,
A drop of the Water of Life is a blessing that comes from a Sadhu." Majh M 5

"Hari Naam alone is Amrit, commune ye with It, through the grace of a Master,
Hari Naam is All-pure, a contact with It ends pain and sorrow." —Kanra War M.4

"A rare soul drinks the cup of divine vintage (Hari Ras),
O Nanak, he gets the reward of the Divine Word and thereafter lives by It." —Asa M.5

"I sacrifice my all on Him, who implanted The life-giving Naam in me,
The ambrosia of Naam is supremely sweet,
One drinks of It by the direction and Will of the Master." —Majh M.3

The scriptures tell us that what we call 'Amrit' or the Water of Life is just the same thing as 'Naam' or the Word. A touch with this divine vintage gives God-intoxication :

"Those who wholly depend on Thy Naam, are completely dyed in Thy colour,

O Nanak ! there is only one exhilarating vintage and no other." —Sarang War M.2

In this age of Kaliyuga, there is no other Wine but of Amrit.

"God's Naam is Amrit in the present Kali age,
This wealth one may get by devotion to a Sadhu." —Ramkali M.5

Amrit is Sound-Principle :

Amrit is Divine Harmony, and is reverberating all the time everywhere. It is the 'Bread of Life' (Manna or Heavenly Food) on which the spirit feeds and thrives,—

"With the meeting of the Satguru, the ever-restless mind gets steady and one finds the tenth door,
There the melody divine—the Bread of Life—holds the universe tight,
Countless are the strains and endless ever, saturated in Truth,
O Nanak ! the contact thereto comes through a God-man alone,
No more the wild-goose-chase for Homewards one is led." —Asa M.3

"A disciplined soul makes one self-disciplined and contented he does become,
An absorption in the Master awakens the inner music of the soul,
By drinking the nectar divine one is contented and rises in His Presence,

Listen ye to the great Music of the harp and taste It night and day,

A rare soul alone understands It through the Master's grace." —Sri Rag M.1

Amrit is Light-Principle :

The vision-centre behind and between the two eyes, if and when directed steadily towards Gaggan, (inner horizon) gradually gets lighted up. It starts with flashes as from a lightening and in course of time makes manifest a starry welkin, and then the Sun and the Moon come to view besides several other lighted scenes. After the spirit transcends all these, and enters Trikuti, the headquarters of the subtle region, there she beholds the Sun of Brahmand and beyond Brahmand, the Moon of Par Brahmand Region. We come across frequent references of the higher spiritual phenomena in the writings of Sant Tulsi Sahib and many others.

"Blessed indeed is the Ambrosial Sound of God the contact whereof comes through the grace of the Master ;

The darkness is dispelled and one gets enlightenment just as the Sun chases away the darkness of the night ;

Then one sees the otherwise Invisible, the Inexpressible and the Unfathomable One, as explained by the Master." —Sri Rag War M.4

"Wondrous sweet is the 'Nectarean Voice' of the Master,

Fortune may favour a rare soul to relish It.
Lighted within, one quafs the quintessence Divine,
And hears the True Sound at the seat of the soul." —Majh M.3

"Pure is the light and Soma Juice is the Word,
A contact with them grants a selfless life of everlasting bliss." —Ramkali M.5

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."
—2 Corinthians 4 : 6

"The Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my Path." —Psalms 119:105

Amrit : Its Location

The divine ambrosia can be had by inversion and not anywhere in the world outside. One can find It only on transcension into the spiritual regions above the physical body. A draught of the Water of Immortality is enough to grant life everlasting to the individual. In order to reach the Hauz-i-Kausar or the pool of nectar, one has to dig deep into the human body.

The human body is the temple of God wherein dwell both the soul and the Over-soul. This temple has quite a number of instruments with which the self within works on the physical plane without. These instruments may be likened to doors and windows through which

the soul and the mind go out into the world in search of worldly pleasures. But the soul itself is imprisoned in the body and knows no way of escape therefrom. The body has nine visible portals: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, mouth, rectum and the generative organ. So long as the spirit remains absorbed in the sensory pleasures, it cannot have an access to the Heavenly regions and, therefore, cannot taste the elixir of life. Besides these nine outlets there is one secret and hidden spring-door behind the centre of the eyes. When the spirit, by means of concentration, is gathered up at this centre, it becomes qualified for ingress into higher realms with all the spiritual heritage therein.

"A whore of spirit that delights in the nine sense organs does not get to the wondrous Reality,
Kabir therefore saith: all the nine chambers lie deserted—Essence is only in the tenth."
—Gauri Kabir

"The nine portals lead to naught—nectar may be sipped at the tenth." —Kalyan M.4

"The Master manifests the Water of Life at the tenth gate,
And listening the Divine Music, one is led to stillness absolute." —Maru M.4

"There is hardly any need now to search without, when the Master has shown the Reality within;

The Unending Music swells in the tenth chamber, there one realises the ambrosial Word." —Maru M.5

The nectar of Divine Harmony is in the human body, and whosoever delves for It, gets It within. All outer activities on the plane of the senses, like pilgrimages, penances and fasts; rites and rituals; forms and formularies are of no avail. In this Path, one has to lose himself, before one rediscovers himself.

"Whosoever loses this life, shall save it."

—Jesus Christ

It means that one can have life eternal only when one learns and practices the art and science of death-in-life by rising above the body consciousness at will. This is the only Way to get the Waters of immortality and there is none besides it.

"The Naam or the Word is the bestower of all gifts,
And It ever abides in the human body."

—Gauri M.5

"Everyone is endowed with the Water of Life,
None but the destined one can drink It."

—Kedara Kabir

"The fountain of Amrit is bubbling over,
One can have a taste of It through the Word of God." —Wadhans M.3

"Like musk in the deer, is hid the nectar within,
And like the deer, a mad search is made without."

—Sorah War M.3

A Sufi saint says,—

"Beloved is in the house and I make a search in the world,
With a spring of crystal water within, I go athirst."

Inside the head, there is an inverted well with an opening behind the eyes. A current of nectar issuing forth from the well, is coming into the body but the unfortunate spirit, ever busy in the outer pursuits of the world, is not destined to have a taste of It and so continues in sorrow.

Everything, of whatever value, is in the body and nothing is without. Whosoever has, through the grace of the Master, found out the treasures within, is indeed blessed and enjoys true happiness both within and without. He drinks the ambrosial showers as they fall and is ever in a state of blissful intoxication. The Way to It, however, lies through some Master-saint and the spirit torn away from her source ever since the day of creation, is once again reconciled with her Creator and lives in perpetual peace and beatitude.

"Everything is within and naught without,
He who searches without, is yet in ignorance.
He who finds It within himself through a Master-soul,
Ever lives in a state of bliss and beatitude.
The Amrit falls down in a big shower,

And the mind enjoys the Sound-current.
Night and day he lives in perfect satiety,
And sings the praises of God.
The aeons of separation come to an end,
And the blighted tree once again blossoms forth.
Gifted with right knowledge, he revels in Naam,
All hail to the Master ! that brought this about."

—Majh M.5

The pool of necter lies in the folds of the mind. It is only when the mind grows still that it becomes manifest. A contact with Naam, grants life eternal.

"O Nanak ! drink within the elixir of life as a pure gift of the Guru,
He alone takes in the divine drink, who is destined from above." —Sarang War M.2

The mind must first be purged of all ills, before one can take the life-giving ambrosia.

"Through instructions of the Master, the mind becomes pure,
And then the sacred pool comes to view."

—Parbhati M.3

Who can taste this Nectar ?

From the writings of the Masters it appears that one cannot taste this nectar until one learns to die while alive. One has. therefore, to 'forsake the flesh for the spirit' (T.A. Kampe) for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,

And take up his cross daily and follow me.
For whosoever will save his life shall lose it,
But whosoever will lose his life for my sake,
the same shall save it." —Luke 9-23 : 24

We have been leading all through a physical existence only. We know how to live on a physical plane and that we do with the help of our physical senses. We have never known if there is anything beyond and whether we have senses subtle and causal apart from the physical and how we can make use of them by transcending the physical plane. There are tremendous possibilities in man, fashioned as he is in the image of God, but alas! in the mighty swirl of the mind and matter we have lost hold of the saving life-line within and are drifting headlong in the stream of life with no anchorage. A Master-saint is the only refuge and the haven where one may for a while have a respite and time to think over his sad plight. And now how does the Master help here? He not only asks one to leave the body by withdrawing the sensory currents at the seat of the soul, but teaches one how to do it. This transcension of the physical body is called 'death-in-life'. It is the 'Open Sesame' that unlocks the door leading into the Kingdom of God.

"If thou wisheth to have an everlasting life,
Learn thou to die in the body, before death
overtakes thee." —Maulana Rumi

"He who knows how to die while living drinks Amrit (the Water of Life),
My mind is convinced of the need of and is devoted to the Master's instructions."
—Asa M.4

"Learn to die while alive, for in the end death overtakes all." —Baba Farid

"Learn how to die that you may begin to live."
—Thomas A. Kampe

"Remember ye the Naam and love the Lord unceasingly,
Live in constant devotion to God's elect.
Those who live-in-death, drink the Water of Life,
And their minds get absorbed through the instruction of the Master." —Asa M.4

"Drink ye the Water of Life—a pure gift from the Master,
With an easy death, ye shall rise in eternal life." —Basant M.1

'Spiritual comfort' is God's free gift and not of our own merit. It comes only through the grace of some God-man. 'He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and more so the Imperishable Way, the Infallible Truth and the Eternal Life'. The absorption in the Master alone helps one to gain the pool of nectar within and this is called 'a second birth', 'a resurrection' and what one may like to name.

Amrit : How one gets It ?

(i) Through the Grace of God :

"God's Word is the Water of Life,
One gets It through His grace.
Remember God every moment of your life,
And make this your constant practice."
—Malar M.5

"Everyone sows his field, but blessed are such as God approves of,
With the help of the Master is sown the seed of divine Nectar,
And then one gets the fruit of the Tree of Life (Amrit)." —Gauri War M.4

(ii) Through pre-ordination: By one's mighty good deeds one may get Amrit within, if so ordained.

"One with earned merit in the past ages, may by pre-ordination find nectar within,
Highly blessed is God's Word, but one may taste of It through the instructions of the Master." —Sri Rag War M.4

(iii) Through devotion to Satguru: Amrit is all-pervading in its fullness, but we can hardly taste It on the plane of the senses.

"Water, water everywhere,
But not a drop to drink."

Amrit is much sought after, even the gods and goddesses are in search of It, but one can partake of It only through the grace of the Master:

"Amrit which is sought after by Rishis, Munis and the gods, that I have found with the aid of the Master,

I have got Amrit through the Master's grace and Truth is now implanted within me."

—Ramkali M.3

One cannot by his own unaided efforts get to the Hauz-i-Kausar or the Fountain of life-water. For this purpose, we have, of necessity, to seek the aid of a living Master who has for himself found this Fountain-head and is competent enough to lead others thereto.

"And he showed me a pure river of Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamp." —Rev. 22 : 1

"The sovereign remedy of Naam lies in the pool of the crystal clear Waters of Life which one gets by the grace of the Master,

Nanak therefore saith: one pre-ordained to get It meets a Master and thereby bids adieu to his ills." —Sorath M.5

"The elixir of life (Amrit) one gets from a Master,

And thereafter he lives by the bread of the holy Word,

All patterns, all colours and all designs are from Him,

A rare soul, O Nanak! lives by this Amrit."

—Majh M.5

"O my Master! I would like to be a sacrifice unto Thee,

Thy very sight is a great bliss for thou out of compassion hast given me the elixir of Naam." —Sri Rag M.5

"God Himself directs and grants communion with His holy Word,
By His grace, one comes across the Master and drinks of the ambrosia (Amrit)."
—Gauri M.3

"Shabd (Word) is Amrit and Bani, the Voice of God as well,
By devotion to the Master, It has become audible." —Majh M.3

(iv) By acceptance of Master's Will and commandments :

"If ye love me follow my commandments."
—Christ

"O mind ! lead a life acceptable to the Master,
For He shall lead thee to thy Native Home,
Grant thee the Water of Life to quench thy thirst,
And all comforts and blessings shall be thine."
—Sri Rag M.3

"The gift of elixir depends on the sweet Will and Pleasure of the Master,
A rare soul may get It without much effort."
—Sri Rag M.3

"In the company of the saints, ye partake of the precious Amrit." —Sri Rag War 4

"A drop of the divine vintage is a great blessing,
You can drink of It through some Sadh."
—Majh M.5

"O Nanak ! he alone lives who practices the Naam,

And partakes of the Water of Life with saints."

—Gauri M.5

Amrit in Its fullness abides in a saint and His glance of grace is enough to transform a person:

"Satguru is Amrit incarnate for He is one with Hari (God),

O Nanak! one remembers God through the grace and finds Him through the Master."

—Gauri War M.3

"Satguru is the pool of nectar and a blessed soul dips into It,

And gets washed off the dirt of ages and communes with the pure Naam."

—Sri Rag M.4

Man comes into the world just to find the river of the Water of Life and this he can do through a Master-soul. But all orders and sects based on outer observances are a source of sorrow, duality and affliction, and one cannot reach the Fountain of Life through such practices. Without the Amrit of Naam, nothing is of any avail and whosoever gets entangled in them, cannot find a Way-out.

"The precious Water of Life for which ye came into the world ye can get from a Master-saint,

"Rise above all thoughts of distinctive labels of various religious and clerical orders,

Cast aside all raiments and rituals as also all cunning and cleverness and mental oscillations,

These shall avail thee not on this Path."

—Sorath M.1

Amrit : who can get It ?

Out of millions of devotees, only a rare one who sits at the feet of a living Master gets contact with the elixir of life :

"God alone grants the heavenly ambrosia,
A rare soul out of myriads may get It."
—Parbhati M.3

"Verily, verily the Amrit showers from above,
But a rare devotee partakes of It,
The mind blossoms forth and sings of His glory."
—Asa M.3

"A devotee of the Master engages in the pursuit,
And finds out the Amrit and becomes truly blessed.
O Man ! commune with the Naam day and night,
Thou shalt lose all the impurities and get sanctified." —Malar M.1

"The divine Amrit falls down in showers,
A devotee through the grace of the All-pervading gets It." —Asa M.4

"The enlivening story of God is truly sublime and we have had a taste of it through the words of the Master,
The heaven's light dawned dispelling all darkness just as sun chases away the night,
The Invisible, the Indescribable, and the Unknowable, became manifest through the instructions of the Master."
—Sri Rag War M.4

In the temple of the human body It is bubbling over in Its fullness, but a man of the world cannot get access to It.

"In the body lies the fount of the Water of Life,
But a sensual individual cannot have a taste of It." —Sorath War M.3

"I would make an offering of myself at the feet of my Master, who unravelled to me the great mystery,
The world, without the Water of Life, is but a waste-land and a worldly wise does not even know of It." —Malar War M.1

Amrit : Its Merits :

The merits of Amrit are countless indeed. A contact with It renders all other joys and pleasures as inconsequential and makes one truly renunciative.

"No longer does he hunger and thirst for things of the world,
He sees Him as All-pervading, in the core of his heart,
Dyed in the colour of Amrit, he renounces all and revels in his Master and his teachings."
—Maru M.1

The Water of Life abides in each heart in Its richness. He who tastes of It, knows Its exhilarating influence. Communion with the Power of God is union with God and one becomes fearless, even of death, the last enemy of mankind. Not only do they achieve freedom but many another along with them get freed.

"Those who relish it become fearless by saturating in the sweet elixir of Naam.
This one gets through the grace of God, and transcends the ken of Kal."

—Maru War M.3

"Amrit in its fullness lies within,
Ye may relish it by an actual contact,
Thou hast cheated the whole world which is agoing,
He who follows the Master derives the greatest benefit,
He who tastes of the true ambrosia, is not molested by death,
Not only does he achieve freedom,
But many another he puts on the Path."

—Sri Rag M.4

Amrit confers many supernatural powers on him who partakes of this wondrous gift, and grants peace and ecstacy. By it one is rid of all pain and sorrow, doubt and scepticism, lusts and passions and is freed from the most ancient malady of egotism, and all desires and cravings fall off like dry leaves as if before an enchanter driven. The mind too gets steady and rarefied. Last but not the least, one gains salvation and attains to the state of Sahaj and is honoured in the presence of God.

From the teachings of the Masters, who laid great emphasis on communion with Him, is no other thing but Naam, Shabd or Word, and this

Pool of Nectar lies within each one of us but becomes manifest only through a glance of grace from some true saint who enables us to partake of It.

Amongst the Sikhs there is the practice of preparing Amrit with the help of a sword. By a careful study of the matter, we realise that this too is in fact prepared with the help of Naam or Bani. The consciousness is first turned inwards so as to contact the inner Sound-principle and then as it comes down saturated with the divine influence, it is turned without converting the preparation into an Amrit. It is only a competent Master (a true Khalsa with full refulgent light in him) who can, by his glance of grace, prepare the Amrit and whosoever partakes of It, becomes truly intuned. A saint with eyes bubbling over with divine intoxication can immediately take one to the mount of transfiguration and make a saint from a man.

"A glance of grace from a saint makes thee a saint." —Sukhmani

One can drink of the divine Nectar through the grace of a Satguru, and truly blessed are they who get an access thereto and rise into the light of Universal Consciousness and gain salvation from the endless wheel of births and deaths; and live in perpetual ecstacy and enjoy His beatitude.

"By drinking of the ambrosia, one lives forever,
By communion with the Lord, one is ever in a state of bliss,
While in the world one remains in a state of clover without any cares and anxieties,
Let the mind and soul be intoxicated by the sweet fragrance of the lotus feet of God,
Nanak saith : O Lord ! I am ever devoted to such as *Chatrak* feels exhilarated by the rain drop." —Gujri M.5

'Spiritual comfort' is God's free gift and not of our own merit. It comes only through the grace of some God-man. 'He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and more so the Imperishable Way, the Infallible Truth and the Eternal Life.' The absorption in the Master alone helps one to gain the pool of Nectar within and this is called 'a second birth', a resurrection and what one may like to name.

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IV

KIRTAN

Celestial strains or Divine Harmony

"KIRTAN"

(Celestial strains or Divine Harmony)

"What passion cannot Music raise and quell?"
—Dryden

Ordinarily, when the hymns of the saints are sung in accompaniment with musical instruments, it is called "Kirtan". The music, as we have it—vocal or instrumental—has a great appeal to the mind because of its power of attraction. It does for a while produce stillness in the mind and the subtle faculties.

Instrumental or vocal, music plays an important part in almost all religious congregations of Yogins, the Hindus, the Sufis, the Christians and and the Sikhs.

Each one of us is attracted by one or the other of the two things: beautiful form or pattern or sweet music, and the latter is by far more magnetic than the former. It has a gripping influence on all living creatures. Take for instance the fleet-footed stag, the antlered monarch, as he is called. No steed can compete with him in speed. But it is entrapped and captured by huntsmen by the power of music. The hunter blows his horn, and the stag attracted by it,

quickly surrenders himself before the power of music. Similarly, the venomous viper and deadly adder, for the time being, forgets his nature under the influence of the snake-charmer's Bina and spends the rest of his life shut up in a basket. The effect of music on human beings as well is quite tremendous. Though one feels enraptured till the music lasts, yet one does not get beyond the emotional influence and remains in the elemental sphere.

From the study of the sacred lore and the teachings of the Masters, we learn that the Inner Music of the soul or the Sound-current or Harmony is ceaselessly going on in each individual and can, if contacted and listened to attentively, lead to ultimate salvation. This 'Dhun' is described in Shree Granth Sahib as 'Akhand Kirtan' or Unending Harmony.

"In this age know ye that Shabd is the Kirtan,
A devotion to Shabd dispels all egotism."

—Asa M.3

"The blessed Naam is the veritable Kirtan of the Lord in the Kaliyuga (the Iron Age) and is the essence of all devotion,
One can engage in Kirtan of Hari Naam through the teachings of the Master."

—Kanra War Shalok M.4

The Kirtan or Naam or Shabd is the only means to spiritual advancement. The reverberation of this Kirtan is all-pervading, and

all-embracing, but It gets manifest only when one, by a process of practical self-analysis and inversion, rises above the body-consciousness. It is characterised by a 'Dhun', the experience whereof one gets in the Sukhman or Shahrag, the central chord in the forehead :

"The Music of Sahaj playing at Thy door doth become manifest in my forehead."

—Ramkali Kabir

In this Iron Age, the last in the series of cyclic ages, there is no other spiritual practice as fruitful and effective as Kirtan or Naam or Hari Kirtan, and this is the be-all and end-all of all types of religious and meritorious deeds.

"In the Fourth Age, O Man ! Naam is a priceless treasure,
Repetition, strict disciplines and pilgrimages suited the earlier ages,
In this age, Kirtan of Hari Naam is the sovereign remedy." —Bilawal M.3

"This is the season of Hari-Kirat
And Hari Naam is the top devotion,
O, sow thy farm with the seeds of Hari Naam,
The sowing of all other seeds will be of no avail,
A sheer waste of time and of labour."

—Asa M.4

One can get a living contact or touch with this Kirtan through the grace of some Master-soul,—

"The crest-jewel of Ram Naam Kirtan (the divine Melody) is with the Master,

And he who follows the Master's teachings, the Master makes that manifest to him."

—Kalyan M.4

In the scriptures, it is stated that those alone can practice and commune with Hari-Kirat who come in close contact with some Master-soul. It is by devotion to the Master that one can contact the Grand Harmony.

"He who is devoted to a Satguru,
Is ever engaged in Hari Kirtan."

—Wadhans War M.3

"From the day a person comes in close touch with a Sadhu, he takes a turn for the better,
Ever in bliss, he engages in Kirtan and comes close to the Creator and Designor of destinies." —Dhanasri M.5

"In this age, Hari Kirtan is the highest discipline for one meets Hari through the Satguru ;
I shall offer myself a sacrifice unto my Master for it is He who has manifested in me the hidden Word." —Jaitsri M.4

"He gets the food of Unending Kirtan,
Whosoever, O Nanak! meets a competent Master." —Gauri M.5

"Blessed is he who serves the saints,
Through saints one engages in Hari Kirtan."

—Gauri M.5

"Through a saint one gets into touch with the Naam,
Through a saints one sings the Hari Kirtan."

—Gauri M.5

"Through a sadh one sings the Hari Kirtan,
Nanak saith—a blessed soul gets It."
—Gauri M.5

"Through a sadh, I have got the merit of Kirtan,
The Path of death has faded away from my ken."
—Gauri M.5

"I have got love for the lotus feet of the Lord,
Through a saint, the mind has become purified,
And I am ever engaged in the Kirtan (Song) of Hari." —Gauri Kabir

"The mind is dyed in the elixir of Naam and is fully satiated,
And through the grace of a saint, sings the Song Divine (Kirtan),
And the Imperishable dwells therein."
—Ramkali M.5

"Through a Sadh, one delights in the holy Music, in this age,
O Nanak! hereafter, he does not return to this world." —Gauri M.5

"They who follow the Satgur, ever listen to the holy Harmony,
The elixir of the Word abides in them and they get absorbed in the True Sound."
—Wadhans War M.3

"The holy Music comes from a Sadhu and communion with It is the highest virtue,
Nanak saith: a pre-ordained alone gets this gift." —Sorath M.5

The Hari Kirtan is a pure gift from the Master and one cannot merit It until one transcends the body. Just as a lode-stone attracts a piece of iron, similarly the Dhun or the Word emanating from God-head attracts the soul and pulls her up to the feet of the Lord. The human mind is ever hankering after pleasures of one sort or another, but no worldly pleasure can secure for it any degree of salvation. The only remedy for stilling and subduing the mind is Hari Kirtan or Naam, hearing which this hydra-headed serpent gets intoxicated as it were by some magic potion, and lies still as it were in a death-trance, unmindful of the sensory organs through which it usually works. Whosoever subjugated his mind, he had to do so by means of Hari Kirtan or Naam. With It soul is roused from age-long slumber and rises into Cosmic and Super Cosmic Awareness. This gives a new birth, the birth of spirit called 'regeneration', or 'resurrection'. Henceforth the spirit escapes from the network of Karmic impressions which get singed and are rendered infructuous. It once more restores the Kingdom of God to the spirit and grants her ever-lasting peace and salvation.

"A new heart also will I give you, and new spirit will I put within you."

—Ezekiel 36 : 26, 27

The manifestation of the Sound-current then depends upon the sweet Will and Pleasure of a

Master-saint and one cannot contact it until one transcends the sensory plane of the physical body. This is the only Way to salvation from the bondage of the mind and matter and there is no other Way besides.

"All ecstatic gesticulations and chanting of songs can be of no avail to one, blind and deaf,
Full of greed and scepticism within he cannot have Heaven's Light to guide him on the Path." —Rag Asa M.3

"While engaged in sinful pursuits one sings Ragas (songs)
And bears testimony to the truth of what they say,
Little knowing that without the Word all is a farce." —Rag Asa M.1

Kirtan : Its Merits :

Kirtan is highly efficacious both here and hereafter:

"O dear self, engage in such a Kirtan,
That may be of use to thee here and hereafter."
—Gauri M.5

Kirtan purifies one of all feelings of envy, hatred and enmity,—

"The devotees of the Master who listen to the divine song (Kirtan),
Their minds get purified of ill-will and envy."
—Gauri M.5

Kirtan is a potent remedy for removing all ills and afflictions: physical, mental and accidental,—

"The Merciful God has in His mercy removed all doubts and distrust,
O Nanak ! through the holy Song I am in bliss, freed from all sorrow." —Gauri M.5

"One who sings the celestial strains,
He is never in pain, sorrow and affliction."
—Maru M.5

Kirtan frees one from all the deadly sins and lusts of the flesh,—

"Sing the perfect Melody, the bestower of all bliss and destroyer of ills,
The Melody is sharper than the two-edged sword,
And kills the deadly sins of lust, passion, greed, attachment and egotism." —Nut M.5

Kirtan awakens one from a long-drawn sleep of ages upon ages,—

"Engaged in devotion one takes to the divine Song,
And is awakened from a long-drawn slumber of ages." —Gond M.5

"One discards the lust for other's wealth, flesh and blood,
When through the grace of the Master, he awakens by the holy Sound." —Dhanna M.5

"Do such actions as would not contaminate thee,
The mind would awaken to Reality by listening to the divine Melody (Harkirtan)."
—Gauri M.5

Kirtan gives immunity from the clutches of death,—

"Approach not", says Yama (the Lord of death) to his messengers,
"The place where a Sadhu dwells or the holy Word reverberates, Or else we alike shall be doomed." Maru M.5

"He in whom the Lord's Song abides,
He is freed from all sorrows, ills and afflictions,
And the fear of death." —Gauri M.5

"He who sings of the Song Divine,
The angel of death affects him not." —Gond M.5

"The minions of death cannot come near him,
He who sings the Song Divine in company of the Master." —Maru M.5

Kirtan grants perfect peace, satiety and bliss :

"The devotee is ever in a state of intoxication,
The Lord had mercy and I got dyed in the colour of His Song." —Sorath M.5

"O Nanak ! God has made a slave of me,
I now live and enjoy the divine glory."
—Majh M.5

Kirtan is acceptable to God, and man has his wishes fulfilled :

"Absorption in the sweet melodies of Music Divine (Kirtan, Rag, Nad and Dhun), is the goal of my life.
O Nanak it is acceptable to God and one gets his desires fulfilled. —Bilawal M.5

"Communion with God ends the cycle of transmigration,

They become acceptable even while living,
And engage in the divine Music of the Lord."
—Gauri War M.5

Kirtan holds priority over all religious practices:

"The Par-Brahm is immanent in all,
O Nanak! engage in Hari Kirtan for that verily is the true religion." —Gauri M.5

In infinite compassion, the saints gave out,—
"One gets the merit of all religions by listening to the divine Melody." —Ramkali M.9

Kirtan is verily the True Yoga :

"Thy Word is the cause of all this creation,
Listening to the Kirtan is a veritable yoga."
—Asa M.5

Kirtan is the saving life-line for all :

"The mind gets disciplined through Hari Kirtan, (the Song of the Lord)
Whosoever sings of the Lord, hears or repeats His praises is surely saved." —Dev Gandhari M.5
"As the Master taught me so do I declare,
Listen ye to what Nanak saith,
It is by Kirtan alone that one is saved."
—Gauri M.5

Kirtan steadies and stills the mind :

"What the Word that keeps one spell-bound ?
What the Way that takes one above pleasure and pain,
What the Path that leads into the Beyond (Par Brahm) ?

What the Discipline that contacts the holy Harmony?
The devotee of the Master leads a life, that may help him to reach into the Beyond (Par-Brahm),
And he contantly recites the Divine Song."

—Majh M.4

"The seeker asks for but one gift,
If it so pleases the Lord, He may have mercy,
Grant me Thy glance of grace that may quell the mind and fill it with Song Divine."

—Maru M.5

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V

Bani & Gurbani

Scriptures and Inner Music

"Bani and Gurbani"

(Scriptures and Inner Music)

The term 'Bani' is rather difficult to define and to understand, as it has a significance that goes far deeper than what it is commonly supposed to be. In common parlance, it means words that we read, write or speak. But saints have used it in altogether a different connotation. Ordinarily there is not much difference in the terms : Bani, Shabd, and Naam, for these three are commonly used interchangeably to denote one and the same thing.

Bani or Naam in every clime and in every time or age is of two kinds : 'Varan Atmik' and 'Dhun Atmik' : the former is an outward expression of the inner feelings by means of words that serve as a vehicle of expression and are commonly used in reading, writing or speaking and the other is an Inner Sound-principle or Sound-current.

Varan Atmic Bani :

It can be classified into four sub divisions : Baikhri, Madhma, Pashyanti and Pra.

Baikhri : These are labial sounds or sounds which are uttered with the aid of tongue and lips.

Madhma : These are guttural sounds which are produced in the throat or at the back or root of the tongue and palate.

Pashyanti : These are sounds which originate from the heart centre.

Pra : These are sounds which arise through vibrations from the navel centre.

All these four types of sounds or words are related in one or other form within the six physical ganglionic centres, and have nothing to do with Naam or the Word or Logos which is alone contacted above the six ganglions, and is capable of granting salvation and is technically called Dhun Atmik Bani or the Eternal Sound-current, the source of God's Light and Life Principles. It is, in fact, the Eternal and Unchangeable Voice of God.

"The Water of Life is given by the Satgur,
It is made manifest in the tenth door,
There the 'Dhun-Bani' reverberates without an end,
And leads one to the state of Sahaj." —Maru M.4

"The five strains commingling forth produce sweet Harmony,
The 'Bani' flows in the unending streams all the while." —Asa M.5

"There are the four different forms of Thy creation and four various modes of speech,

But apart from Naam, one wanders without a lead." —Majh M.3

There are four sources of creation:

(i) Uttbhuj: which grow from the soil like vegetables and trees, etc.

(ii) Setaj: which come through sweat and filth etc. like lice and worms.

(iii) Andaj: which take their birth in eggs and shells, like fowls and birds.

(iv) Jeraj: which come through the womb.

The four kinds of sounds have already been described.

The entire creation expresses itself in one or other kind of Varan Atmik sound and not in the Dhun-Atmik and as such wanders about restlessly in the giant wheel of life.

The Varan Atmik language is also known as language of the Pranas or the Vital airs for it depends on different types of vibrations in the air; but as said above, it leads to wilderness with no way-out.

"We speak and hear the airy language,
And the mind gets entangled in oblivion."

—Sri Rag M.1

Dhun Atmik Bani:

It is the Eternal Sound-current reverberating endlessly in every living thing. It is an 'Unwritten Law' and an 'Unspoken Language'. It is above the ken of elements and the six chakras. It, however, becomes audible when a

spirit rises above the body-consciousness. In Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs, this Sound-principle is generally referred to as 'Naam' upto 'Trikuti' and beyond 'Daswam Dwar', where the causal region extends, It is called the 'Trigun Bani' or Sound within the regions of three Gunas. It is also described as 'Brahm Janjalla', the network of Brahm, the God of creation. This 'Trigun Bani' or 'Brahm Janjalla' is within the borderland of 'Kal' or Dissolution and hence is likely to disintegrate. Kabir Sahib says,—

"Japa (oral), Ajapa (soundless) and Anhad (the limitless Sound), all have an end,
The Surat when absorbed in Shabd, alone, escapes."

Guru Amar Das says,—

"The Bani that is within the three gunas is a great net-work of the Creator (Brahma) ;
It keeps one in discussion, reasoning and thinking within the realm of Kal." —Gauri M.3

Thus the Sound-current beyond the trans-border of Kaal, is known as 'Sar Shabd', variously described as 'Sachi Bani' or True Word, and as such is True and It alone is the real Life Current or the Saving Life Chord capable of linking the spirit or soul with Oversoul.

"The Word of the Master is an elixir True,
O Nanak! through the Word, one can transcend O'er." —Ramkali M.1

"The True Word, bursts asunder the three-fold egg,
O Nanak ! It is the Saviour that saves all."
—Ramkali M.1

"He Himself draws in and absorbs, making the spirit neat and clean,
He is Truth, True is His Sound that effects the Union True." —Sri Rag M.3

"Wonderful indeed is the 'Bani' that unites one with Truth,
Nanak saturated in that wondrous wonder, has met the Lord,
One gets to It only through a mighty good fortune." —Gujri War M.3

"He alone meets God whom God so ordains,
And in him the True Bani manifests as Shabd,
O Nanak ! then one ever sings of the virtues of the True One,
And so singing he gets truly absorbed in them."
—Maru M.3

"The fearless Donor comes to reside in the mind,
And the True Bani descends in the heart of a rare fortunate soul." —Asa M.3

"The fortunate with a virtuous past alone meets a Master-soul,
And the Word of the Master makes the True Bani manifest." —Asa M.3

"The elixir of Guru's Bani is delectably sweet,
A rare disciple of the Master may taste of It."
—Majh M.3

"The endless 'Bani', a Master may manifest,
He who listens to It is perpetually blessed,
And all comforts come unto him as a pure gift."
—Suhi M.5

"Rare souls alone get absorbed in the 'Bani'
through the grace of a Master,
The 'Bani' of the Lord takes one to the Eternal
Home of the Father." —Gauri M.1

"True is the Shabd and True the 'Bani',
A devotee of the Master gets to It, and sings of
It in every age." —Asa M.3

It does not mean that whatever the saints utter by word of mouth, has no value and is ineffectual. On the contrary, it means that of all the Varan Atmik words and sounds, these alone occupy the highest place for the flow of their words comes from afar out of the inexhaustible fund or reservoir at the back of all Fuqra-i-Kamil or Master-souls, for they speak of nothing but what they actually see and experience in the depth of their soul. Their words have and are worth tons of gold and emerald for the seekers after Truth. They do not speak at the intellectual level, but their words well out of themselves and are charged with the inner inspiration, and carry in them the weight of conviction:

"Whatever comes to me from the Father,
That do I utter, O Lalo." —Tilang M.1

"When a Sadh opens his mouth,

A veritable nectar-spring bursts forth."

—Gauri War M.5

"The spirit of Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue."

—2 Samuel 23 : 1, 2

"Holy men of God spake as They were moved by the Holy Ghost." —2 Peter 2 : 21

"Lowly Nanak speaks out only when he is bidden to do so." —Rag Maru M.5

The writings of the saints are wonderful and valuable records of their spiritual experiences and serve the pilgrims as mile-stones on the Path of spirituality,—

"Except the words of the Master, all else is not up to the mark,

All the writings and the sayings are verily not perfect,

Imperfect is the speaker and imperfect will remain the listener as the same come out of the imperfect." —Ramkali M.3

"O ye the disciples of the Master sing the Naam eternally for God Himself makes It manifest through a Godman,

Believe ye the words (Bani) of the Master as verily true,

It is only God who speaks through the human pole." —Gauri War M.4

"Blessed is the devotee of the Lord and blessed are the words (Bani) he utters for the good of mankind,

He who attends to His discourse in all sincerity,
God Himself helps him through."

—Gujri M.4

"The words (Bani) of the Sadh are ambrosial,
Whosoever puts them into practice, reaches the goal and always speaks of the Word."

—Suhi M.5

"The words (Bani) of the devotee are divine,
He presents the Eternal Truth in varied forms,
Blessed is such a life for not only does he attain salvation but many another through him."

—Gujri M.4

The writings and discourses of the saints tell us and point out to us the True Bani, which is the very life of the creation and grants Nirvan or salvation. It is the actual Truth, the Formless and Absolute, Sahaj Katha (the Perennial Language), Akath Katha (the Unspoken Language). It is the Voice of God, self-flowing nectar, call it Naam or Shabd, Word, Amrit or Logos, Kalima or Bang-i-Ilahi, Sruti or that which is heard. It is the source and spirit of the creation, It is the very life and light, self-luminous, shadowless and Eternally Radiant.

"The Word of the Master is a sweet Harmony (Bani),
And sings of Hari Naam day and night,
The True Lord abides in the core of the heart,
A heart like this is pure indeed." —Maru M.3

"Bani or Shabd is verily the Great Truth, Oh! love them with all your heart;

With the Word or Naam dwelling inside, one is rid of anger and egotism." —Sri Rag M.3

"Shabd or Bani (divine music) is the Water of life (Amrit),
And comes to reside in one's soul by following the instruction of the Master." —Majh M.3

"Engage ye in the True Bani, the True Melody and the True Sound,
To live always in Truth is fortunate indeed and blessed is the one who doeth so."
—Wadhans M.3

"The Jnana, the meditation and the Dhun Bani (inner music) are all one and describe the Indescribable,
The Word (Shabd) speaks of the True One but the Word can be experienced through the Master." —Basant M.1

"Take mercy on me and accept me as Thy bondsman,
And snap all my bonds and take me out of the net,
Let me live ever in the sweet remembrance of They Word (Naam) or They Sound-principle (Bani),
Nanak Thy slave would gladly offer himself as a sacrifice unto Thee." —Dev Gandhari M.5

"The untold tale of the Voice of God (Prabh Bani), is the true Water of Life (Amrit),
Nanak saith : a truly wise lives in communion with Him (Bani)." —Bilawal M.5

"How great His glory and life giving (Amrit) His Bani (Sound-principle),
Let His Word (Naam) alone abide in my heart."
—Gauri M.5

"Listen ye the blessed one, to the sweet music of the life-giving (Amrit) Bani (Sound principle),
He who is so destined, in his heart alone It becomes manifest." —Bihagra M.5

In Rig Veda (Wak Ambarni Sukat), we have a wonderful account of It. Vak Devi saith:

"All Devas (gods) have their abode in me, and I look after each one of them. I am the efficient and the material cause of the very creation and I am sustaining the same. I am Knowledge and Enlightenment."

Again, we have—

"I am the Creator of all regions and the demons and I am all-prevailing like the Pranas or the vital airs in all the forms and bodies. I occupy all space and girdle the Universe in the form of ether. In fullness, I exist, here, there and everywhere, beyond the earth, the sky with hosts of solar systems and by the power of my inherent nature, they have assumed all forms and all colours."

—Rig Ved, Mandal 10, Sukat 125 and Atharv Ved, Kand 4, Sukat 30.

This Vak Devi or Bani is characterised by Dhun or Harmony, for it is Sound-principle, the primal manifestation of the Formless God (Kutastha).

"The unstruck self-existing Sound (Anhat Bani) pours forth symphonies from the wondrous throne of God,
The Melody of that Sound bewitches me O Lord." —Gauri M.5

"Naam, Dhun or Bani is the manifestation of God,
So say the Smritis, the Shastras and the Vedas."
—Gauri M.5

"What is the signpost of the abode of God ?
There springs forth the perennial Harmony."
—Ramkali Beni ji

It is an Eternal Sound-principle not bound by time and space,—

"Everything rests in and is sustained by Sound,
In the four divisions of time,
This Sound-principle was ever heard,
Emanating from Truth, It speaks of Truth."
—Sri Rag M.3

"Sterling true is the Word (Sound-principle),
Godmen have manifested It in every age."
—Asa M.3

"The True Sound (Bani) has been adored in all the four ages,
Everything is from that Truth and there is naught else besides Him."
—Gauri Gaureri M.3

"The True Sound (Bani) has in all the four ages been described as the Water of Life,

With a mighty good fortune, a pre-ordained is taken to and rests in the Word (Naam)."

—Dhanasri M.3

"I sing of the Lord, should the Lord be so pleased,
With the fragrant Word (Naam) and the Sound (Shabd) beating in the core of my heart;
Gurbani (the Word of the Master) is heard reverberating on all sides,
Springing right from Truth, It ends in Truth."

—Maru M.3

"Gurbani is Naad, Vedas and still more, and
The mind when saturated in It gets fully absorbed, like Sarang in Water."

—Ramkali M.3

"The wondrous Bani is from the Formless One,
And nothing out-shines the glorious Bani.
Its extent and Its depth surpass all imagination,
For It is Truth Himself and naught else."

—Gauri War M.3

Now the question is where is this Sound-principle which has been reverberating throughout the four Yugas (divisions of time) and how can It be found out? Guru Nanak tells us,—

"The True Bani (Sound) is reverberating in the body,
Should the True One so ordain, one can know himself,
It is with the knowledge of the Self that the True One becomes known, and Truth manifests Itself."

Suhi M.3

"The sweet nectar of Thy Voice (Bani)
Abides in the heart of Thy devotees."

—Sri Rag M.1

"The tuneful trumpet of Thy doorway,
Sounds in the middle of my forehead."

—Ramkali Kabir

It is all-prevailing both within and without for there is no place where It is not in Its fullness.

"Thy Voice is both within and without,
Thou speakest and maketh manifest."

—Majh M.5

The Word of the Master (Gur-ki-Bani) resides in every heart,
He Himself manifests It and he does hear It.
Whoever communes with It, is freed from bondage,
And gets to an Everlasting and Eternal region."

—Maru Soleh M.5

The Voice of God springs forth from the Light of God. The true devotion, therefore, lies in the worship of the Sound-current, for It links man with God. Paltu Sahib says,—

"In the inverted well of the head, there burns a lamp,
The lamp burns, but without any wick or oil.
Thro' seasons six and months twelve doth It burn night and day,
But none may himself see the Light, except with the Master's grace.
A voice springs forth from within the lamp's flame,

In the stillness of the soul, one may hear the Voice,
O Paltu! blessed is the one that hears this Voice,
For in the inverted well of the head, there burns a lamp." —Paltu Sahib

"The disenchanted mind is freed from illusions,
When it gets disciplined through communion with Shabd,
From the Heaven's Light within, there springs forth Harmony,
And keeps one absorbed in the True One."
—Sorath M.1

The famous Decalogue or ten Commandments that constitute the core of Mosaic Law, were delivered to Moses in the midst of thunder and flame. The very creation lives by the power of Naam or the Light and Sound of God.

"Oh! the one life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere."
—S. T. Coleridge

Again, saints tell us that the Sound-current is reverberating within Sukhman, the central channel between Ida and Pingla, the two side nerves in the middle of forehead.

"The True Voice of the Master adept,
Is heard in the Sukhman with mind at rest."
—Dhanasri M.3

Though It resides in each one of us, but only a saint or a Master-soul can make It manifest to us :

"Wonderful is the Voice of the perfect Master,
Manifested by the Master, It merges one in Truth." —Dhanasri M.3

"By practice of the True Word (Sachi Bani), one is rid of all pains, sorrows and afflictions,
The devotees are ever in a clover through the favour of the perfect Master."
—Ramkali M.3

"Through the instructions of the Master, the Bani is made manifest within,
The true Word (Sachi Bani), sings the glory of God." —Gauri M.1

"Ambrosial is the Bani of the perfect Master,
In His mercy, he may make it manifest within,
No more doth he remain in the gyres,
But gets eternal peace and rest."
—Ramkali War M.5

"When one gets It, he knows of It,
Without true Jnana, one knows naught,
Master's gift ever abides in the heart,
Bani then remains eternally manifested."
—Maru M.3

"The Voice of God (Bani), arises from and leads back unto Him,
His untold tale can be listened to in the Word made manifest by the Master."
—Gauri Gaureri M.3

One can know of the Voice of God and can take cognisance of It through the grace of a perfect Master. It comes as a pure gift from the Master, and we cannot have It by any other means. Truly speaking, Guru is Word Personified, and each revels in abundance in the other. Guru Arjan addressed his Guru "Glorious art Thou with Thy melodious Harmony."

"The Word is the Master and the Master the Word (Bani), personified.
In the Word lies the pool of Nectar (Amritsar),
The devotee of the Master practices the Word,
And the living Master rescues him through."

—Nut M.4

The above is clearly borne out by Bhai Gurdas when he says,—

"The Vedas and the scriptures are but handy aids to the Master,
The Way to true salvation however lies in His hands, and
Unless the Guru appears, one cannot see God."

Bhai Gurdas I, 17

In Guru Granth Sahib, It is spoken of as 'Gupti Bani' or the 'Hidden Voice' the 'Anhad Bani' or the 'Limitless Voice,' the 'Aghur Bani' or the unspoken (unmanifest) Word.

"The Hidden Voice becomes manifest,
O Nanak ! only the True One knows of It."

—Ramkali M.1

"Limitless is the treasure of Sound,

God-man holds the key to the Sound."

—Ramkali M 5

"With a true love for the Lord,
The unmanifest Word becomes manifest."

—Ramkali M.1

Bani : Its Merits :

1. It grants eternal peace and repose leading to salvation.

"O Lord ! Thy Word (Bani) is ambrosia or the Water of Life,
And by attuning to It, I am wafted Heaven-wards." —Majh M.5

2. It destroys the canker of egotism of I-ness.

"A touch with the Unending Sound (Anhad Bani) kills all I-ness,
Let me scrupulously obey my Master and be a scrifice unto Him." —Sri Rag M.1

"The virtuous Word (Nirmal Bani) ever resides with the Formless One (Nij Ghar),
O Nanak ! It destroys all thoughts of I-ness, and makes one disillusioned." —Asa M.3

3. It helps in acquiring self-knowledge and takes one beyond the Trigunatmic regions.

"By loosing oneself (in the Bani) one becomes all-knowing,
By attuning with the Word (Bani), one gets absorbed in Truth." —Asa M.1

"By devotion to the Master, one knows of the three worlds,

He becomes the knower of the self and merges in the Lord." —Asa M.3

4. It washes off all sins and sorrows.

"Pure is Bani and pure the Shabd,
And pure light resides in all.
The pure Bani sings of the glory of God,
And the practice of It washes off all sins."
—Majh M.3

5. It vanquishes the deadly sins.

"Oh! I have vanquished the deadly sins,
How delectably sweet is the Saviour Word (Bani)!
Nanak saith: the mind gets enlightened,
And one reaches the region of pure silence (Bliss)." —Gauri M.5

6. It helps in all possible ways, sets everything in order and grants bliss to body and mind.

"By listening the Voice of the All-pervading God (Bani Ram Naam),
One's endeavours are coverd with success,
From the very pores of the Master's devotees spring forth the melodies of the Divine Harmony." —Asa M.4

Without the aid of Bani, one ever remains in ignorance and wanders in the wilderness of life, ever a prey to fears and mental distress and distraint.

"He does not cognise the Shabd nor apprehend the Bani,

A slave to the mind and the senses he remains in affliction and sorrow." —Dhanasri M.3

This is why in the Guru Granth Sahib a great stress is laid on Practice of the Bani :

"Come ye the loved disciples of the Master, sing the True Bani,
Sing the Bani of the Master, a Bani which is the crest-jewel of all sounds." —Ramkali M.3

The Bani springs into being under the Command (Hukam) of the Most High and one can listen to the same under His Will,—

"Only if Thou Willeth I sing the Bani,
Only if Thou Willeth I express the Truth."
—Gauri Gerasi M.5

Gurbani

Gurbani is not something separate from Bani. In fact, the two terms are synonyms. Since Bani is made manifest by the Guru, it is very often spoken of as Gurbani.

Gurbani is the Heaven's light for the entire world and serves as a beacon or light-house to the people in distress :

"In the stormy sea of life, Gurbani (Master's Word) is a Powerful Light-House,
But one is guided by this Light only if so ordained." —Sri Rag M.3

A contact with the Master's Word (Gurbani) purifies the mind and body of all the impurities, mental and physical, and leads to the union of the little self with the Over-self. Whoever

practices this, is saved from the clutches of death and regains the Kingdom of God :

"In the treasure-house of devotional practices,
Gurbani is a peerless gem,
By listening, singing and practicing (Gurbani),
one lives in a state of perpetual bliss."

—Asa M.5

Gurbani is Naad, the Anhad Dhun or the Sound-principle :

"Only if it please Thee, my Lord, may I sing of Thy glory,
And within me shall dwell Thy Word, the fragrant Naam,
And the reverberations of the Gurbani, (Shabd) be heard in the four corners of the Universe,
And thus all be absorbed in the True Naam."

—Maru M.3

"Gurbani is Naad, Vedas and still more,
Mind absorbed in It, gets full satiation."

—Ramkali M.1

Last Appeal :

"O ye the beloved of the Lord, learn to know the Word of the Master (Satgur Bani),
Evanescent as the fleeting clouds are both the blooming youth and the ageing body,
Death may come like a thief in the night, engage ye in the Inner Music of the Soul."

—Maru M.1

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VI
GUR MANTRA
Master's Word

"Gur Mantra"

(Master's Word)

In Sikh scriptures, we often come across terms like Gurbani, Bani, Shabd or Naad, all of which are just synonymous and there is not much difference in their connotation. The Masters of the highest order are always concerned with Naam, or Shabd, and they initiate seekers after Truth into Its significance, for It puts them on the Path God-wards. Christ calls It as the Word or Logos, Holy Ghost or the Comforter which rediscovers God in man and leads to salvation,—

"Listen ye, O friend! the devotee of the Lord,
Has given me the Word 'Truth' as Guru-Mantra."

—Wadhans M.5

"The Master has given me the Mantra of Hari Naam,
With this boon all my desires are fulfilled."

—Gauri M.5

This Mantra of the Guru, one may get by a great good fortune:

"The Word of the Master becomes manifest,
O Nanak! if it is so ordained by God."

—Gauri M.5

This Word or Naam is characterised by Light and Sound. In fact, through the grace of the

Master, It manifests Itself in each individual in the form of Heaven's Light, the Shadowless Light, Light that never is on sea or land, self-luminous and radiant light that shines in darkness, light that is more lustrous than that of thousands of suns put together. It is the Heaven's Sovereign Light.

"In utter darkness, the Master's Word (Guru-Mantra) shines forth into light,
In the company of the Master, all are rescued and saved." —Gond M.5

"I am the Light of the world, He that followeth Me, shall never walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life."
—John 1 : 8, 9

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my Path. We are called out of darkness into His marvellous Light."
—1 Peter 2 : 19

The seat of Naam or Word is in the deepest recesses of the human spirit or soul,—

"The precious crest-jewel of the Naam (the Word of God) is implanted by the devotee of the Lord in the heart of man."
—Prabhati M.4

Again,—

"Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own."
—1 Corinthians

The manifestation of Naam or Word is possible only through the grace of the living Master for it is simply His gift and comes from Him. It cannot be earned :

"I sing ceaselessly all the time,
The Master has given me the perfect Word or Mantra."
—Bhairon M.5

"By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God."
—St. Paul to Ephesians

"We are all as un-clean things, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."
—Isiah 64 : 6

"For the grace of God bringeth salvation."
—Titus 2 : 11

"Neither is their salvation in any other ; for there is none other, none under heaven given among men, whereby we shall be saved."
—Acts 4 : 12

It is not possible to put in so many words the greatness of the Master's Word or the Holy Ghost. It affords a key to the Kingdom of God. From man-making, it gradually leads to God-making. The Lost Paradise is regained for man. As he comes to his own, he understands the true values of life, the essential unity of his own soul with the Over-soul (pervading everywhere and permeating in all) and culminating in the consummation of the two. He is now no longer a separate entity but becomes a Conscious

Co-worker on the Divine Plan, participating in His glory and in His greatness.

"He is a man of all virtues and honoured amongst all,
To whomsoever the Master gives the Mantra of the Word (Naam)." —Kanra M.5

The work of the Holy Spirit is described by Jesus Christ as,—

"I will send Him (the Comforter) unto you, and when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness; and of judgement...When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth."
—John 16 : 7, 8, 13

"And thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee, saying this is the Way, walk ye in It, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." —Isiah 30 : 21

The Word of the Master is purely a gift of the Master. It can neither be earned nor learned. It may come when It may :

"But of that Day and Hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." —Matt. 24 : 36

"But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." —2 Peter 3 : 10

It works and operates by grace alone. Spiritual insight can neither be taught nor bought, but it may be caught like an infection from one

infected with it. As light comes from light, so does life from life ; and truly blessed is the one, who gets it.

"God can be worshipped in the company of a Sadh (a disciplined soul or a saint),
The Guru just gives the Mantra of the Word (Naam) which he makes manifest."

—Gauri M.5

Guru-Mantra, has a great and powerful saving-grace in It. At the death, it comes forth in the Radiant Form of the Master to lead the spirit back to the mansion of the Lord and the spirit thus escorted passes unhindered from plane to plane and is honourably received everywhere. In life's sojourn on this earth, also, one passes his days in ease and comfort, far above the turmoil of life :

"Take ye the lesson in the Word (Mantra) from a Master and practice the same,
Those who love the Lord are ultimately saved at the time of death,
O Nanak ! those who practice the Word (Mantra) of the Master, day and night,
They shall certainly be saved." —Gond M.4

"With the Word of the Master (Guru Mantra) in the heart, one becomes fearless and can have no sorrow and affliction,
None without the aid of a Master has ever been able to cross over the stormy sea of life, with all his wits about him." —Sri Rag M.5

"Whosoever receives the Word of the Lord (Hari Mantra) from a Master,
He doth escape unscathed from the hell-fires of the world." —Gauri M.5
"Four things remain eternally true : Naam, Sadhu, Guru and Gobind,
Nanak saith : a rare soul in this world practices the Word of the Master (Guru-Mantra)."
—Shalok M.9

Again, one who is not fortunate to establish a contact with the Word is spoken of by Guru Arjan, thus,—

"What is the life of one without contact with the Word,
Nothing better than that of a dog or a swine, an ass or a snake." —Shalok Sahanskriti M.5

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VII
VAKHAR
A true deal in True Wares

"Vakhar"

(A true deal in True Wares)

In the scriptures, it is stated that the purpose of the human birth is to gather the merchandise of Vakhar : the wares of Naam or the Word ; for It is an 'open sesame' that unlocks the kingdom of heaven and makes one accepted at and honoured in His Court. 'Vakhar' then consists in the practice of and communion with the holy Word,—

"The Master makes with thee the true deal,
He who gathers in the True Wares (Sacha Vakhar), he revels in the True Word."

—Maru M.1

"Serve One, collect One, ask for and pray God for one thing,
Gather ye the riches of Naam (Vakhar Dhan) O Nanak that is the true capital."

—Jaitsri War M.5

"We trade in the True Word (Saach Vakhar),
O Nanak ! a devotee of the Master gets through."

—Ramkali M.1

Vakhar or the merchandise of Naam is in abundance with the saints and one can have It from them alone,—

"The Vakhar (the stock-in-trade) for which ye have come into the world,

The All-pervading Word (Ram Naam) ye can get from saints. —Gauri Sukhmani M.5

"The pilgrim soul has been able to contact the Master,

The stock-in-trade (Vakhar) that ye desireth, ye can have through communion with the Word." —Asa War M.5

Just as we have emporiums and entrepots as centres for collecting and distributing commercial goods, in the same way we have in the human body a centre where Vakhar can be gathered in, collected and distributed. It has, of course, to be mined out in the recesses of the soul with the help and guidance of the Master.

"This body is the merchant's storehouse and has in it the precious 'Vakhar' as wares,

A rare vendee may get it through following the instruction of the Master."

—Sorath M.5

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VIII
DEEKSHA
Initiation

"Deeksha"

(Initation)

In almost all the scriptural lore, we come across, in one form or another, a term that stands for and commonly denotes 'initiation', i.e. introduction of a person into the principles of some science. The Muslims generally use the word 'Bait' for initiation, while others call it as 'Deeksha' or 'Deekhia'. Among the Christians, the admission to the Church is known as 'Baptism' or 'Christening'. The Hindus call It as 'Duojanma' or the Second Birth.

This initiation or introduction into the tenets of a new science is not something formal or by word of mouth only. It has a far deeper significance than is understood to be. It is tantamount to adopting an individual into the very life and spirit of the tenets that are introduced to him in theory. It is conveying life-impulse to the initiate and giving him first-hand experience of the source of life. It has thus a two-fold aspect: theoretical as well as practical.

At the time of the initiation, the Master explains to the individuals concerned the theory of the spiritual science or 'Para Vidya' (the knowledge of the Beyond). It is an admitted fact that theory precedes practice, for, a correct

understanding of the subject is of paramount importance before one is to put the theory into practice. A successful application and experimentation with verifiable results, cannot be carried on without a correct knowledge and understanding of the subject.

As spirituality is the science of the spirit or soul—a Living Principle, the very Breath of Life—an adept in spirituality has got to impart to every initiate a particle of his own life-impulse (called 'Jia Dan'), ere the latter can understand what the 'life of spirit' is, as apart from 'the life of flesh' that he has been leading hitherto, for it is the spirit or soul alone that can apprehend and experience the Over-soul, when freed from the trammels of the flesh, the mind, the pranas (vital airs), and all the outgoing faculties; all of which constitute the Outer-man as engaged in the world and worldly pursuits on the sensual plane.

"By imparting his own life-impulse, he instils true devotion in a person and unites him with the Lord." —Suhi M.5

Who is competent to initiate

The initiation into the esoteric science of the soul can successfully and rightly be granted by some perfect saint or Master—an adept in the art and science of Para Vidya or Knowledge of the Beyond. One who has not himself extricated and freed his spirit from the body-bondage and

transcended into higher spiritual regions and who has not seen Reality face to face and has not, by spiritual practice, become established in Truth, cannot possibly do anything in this behalf. A saint of the highest order alone is competent to show the Path and lead Godwards, call him what one may, a Sant Satguru, a Murshid-i-Kamil, a Prophet, a Messiah or a Master-soul. As light comes from light, so does life from life. The scriptural lore, by itself, is unable to impart this life-impulse.

"Meet a Satguru and take his initiation,
Surrender thy all and peep within."

—Gauri M.1

"Be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

—Acts : 2 : 38

"By one spirit are we all baptised."

—1 Corinthians 12 : 13

"We are called 'out of darkness' into His marvellous Light." —1 Peter 2 : 9

The knowledge of the esoteric teachings consists in the exposition of Simran, Dhyan and Bhajan, that is to say repetition (mental with tongue of thought only) of the words which are charged with the power of the Master; concentration or meditation (fixing consciousness or gaze) at the centre of the two eyebrows; and linking the spirit with the 'Saving Life-line' within, ever reveberating in the form of

a perennial 'Sound-current', the very life-breath of the Universe ; of which he himself is the living embodiment. As soon as a devotee is able to transcend the physical body, the Radiant Form of the Master, called Guru Dev, appears in the subtle plane and becomes a guiding force to the spirit on the journey into higher spiritual realms bringing him back to the True Home of his Father. Henceforth the Master-spirit never leaves the soul, but continuously helps and directs: visibly and invisibly, directly and indirectly, in this life and the life hereafter, as the occasion may demand.

"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." —Matt. 28 : 18, 20

"And him that cometh to me,
I will in no wise cast out."

—John 6 : 37

"I shall never leave thee nor forsake thee till the end of the world." —Christ

"Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side."

—Everyman

No man, however learned he may be, however high his morals be pitched, can, by his own unaided efforts rise above the body-consciousness. The experience of the spirit withdrawal while living can be vouchsafed only by a Master-saint and by none else and without

this transcendence one cannot peep into the world beyond and take hold of the Sound-principle—the Divine Chord in man, the link between the Creator and His creation.

"It is the Divine Law that none can conceive of Him (God) without a Satguru."

—Bihagra War M.3

"No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

—John 14 : 6

"Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." —Matt. 11 : 27

Initiation from a Master-soul is of paramount importance, for herein lies the secret of all esoteric teachings and esoteric experience. It means a New Birth, and a New Life, entirely in a new setting. This spiritual birth or birth in the Master is called a second birth, that enables a person to turn over a new leaf, to say good-bye to the past and to march forward to his original Home, the long forgotten paradise—New Jerusalem, the Holy City, the Muqam-i-Haq or Sach Khand.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." —John 3 : 3

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

—John 3 : 6

The Kingdom of God: Where It is

The Kingdom of God, as at present, is a lost dominion for us. Ever since the fall of man, for his first disobedience to God's commandment, we stand ostracised from the Garden of Eden and can have no access to it. Under the over-bearing pressure of the world and worldly pursuits, we have become, entirely extrovert and have no thought of God and His Kingdom within,—

"The Kingdom of God cometh not by observation: the Kingdom of God is within you."
Luke 17-20:21

The priceless Waters of Immortality lie buried and lost within the depths of the human soul. The call of the Master-soul, is,—

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.
Matt. 10: 39

"The Son of Man cometh, to seek and save that which is lost." Luke 19-10

All this leads to the one irresistible conclusion, death-in-life, for without it one cannot rise into Universal Consciousness or Cosmic Awareness. This higher life of spirit depends entirely on the grace of a living Master, capable of imparting his Life-Impulse and granting the saving life-line within,—

"The dead in Christ shall rise first."
—Thessalonians

"I am crucified in Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

—St. Paul Epistle to Galatians

With initiation and spiritual Sadhan or practice, one gradually becomes aware of his shortcomings, tries to weed out the same, and the more he purifies himself, the more he grows into 'Life-Divine'. As the scales begin to drop off, the true values of life become more and more apparent. The spirit gradually gets freed from the shackles of the world and is enabled to transcend the physical body and make flights into the higher regions. Hereafter, he walks not after the flesh but after the spirit (Roman 8-1, 4). Living in the world, he is no longer of the world. He now delights in the bliss of higher spiritual regions and not in the pleasures of the senses and sense-objects. The gift of Naam or Word comes only from a Master-soul who, by injecting his own life-impulse, befits an initiate for the spiritual journey.

The measure of advance, sooner or later, however depends on the individual's own make-up, the ground on which he stands, and the preparation that he may have made in the past incarnations. Each one has, therefore, his own background, his own mile-stone from where to

start. The seed is sown but its unfoldment, growth and development rests on the nature of the inner soil of each, its quality, its fertility, and fecundity, the moisture in the soil and its other constituents.

The Master injects his own consciousness : Light and Sound, into each initiate. Once the contact with the Divine Link is established and the spiritual experience gained, howsoever little it may be, to begin with, at the lowest level, it can, by regular day to day practice, be developed to any length one may like until it becomes quite natural and normal, a work-a-day routine, a matter of voluntary withdrawal of spirit currents as and when one may like.

"The devotee of the Master comes and goes at his will and pleasure, with no let or hinderance." —Ramkali Dakhni Onkar

Each one as said before, however, takes his or her own time for efflorescence and fructification. The dormant spiritual faculties begin to quicken with life and the initiate feels within him a sort of fullness, a satiety, or blessedness. This is a gift imperishable and indestructible. It can neither be stolen nor washed away. The seed of spirituality once sown in the inner-most depths of the soul, cannot but bear flowers and fruits, in fulness of time. No power on earth can stand in the way of its growth nor can any power stultify or stifle it in any way whatsoever.

He who has once been initiated by a competent Master, his liberation from the bondage of mind and matter, is assured, once for all and is but a question of time. The seed of spirituality sown in him is bound to sprout and fructify. The spirituality when awakened and the spiritual experience gained cannot but develop and the Master-power cannot rest contented until the child owned is reared and taken home to the house of the Father.

The true knowledge dawns only with initiation, for without initiation from a Master-soul, one can have no knowledge,—

"There can be no Jnana (true knowledge) without meeting a Master-soul, nor meditation without a first-hand experience."

—Bhairon M.5

But one who is fortunate enough, may have the experience of both through the grace of a Master-saint, It means taking in a particle of Life's Living Principle through some God-man or Polarised God, i.e. a Pole from where the Power of God works in this world. In the light of this knowledge, the mind gradually loosens its tentacles that are holding the soul, as it were, in hoops of steel, until the spirit frees itself from the mind and is able to know and perceive her own true and innate nature.

"O Nanak! without knowing oneself by self-analysis, one wanders ever in the wilderness of delusion." —Dhanasri M.9

"The whole world is in the throes of attachment and infatuation,
A rare devotee of the Master escapes from the mighty maze of mind matter,
This infatuation keeps in perpetual motion the wheel of life,
And it takes one time and again into the clutches of Kal." —Asa M.1

The process of liberating a human soul from the labyrinth of the sensual plane lies in the hands of a competent Master of Para-Vidya or Science of the Beyond; competent both in theory and practice. One who has himself liberated his soul and can, at will, go to the higher spiritual regions, can take others as well. It is a work of great trust and responsibility which the so-called Masters with which the world always abounds can hardly do. Those who prescribe outer Yogic practices or the performance of rites and rituals, sacrifices and austerities, pilgrimages and the like, are yet ignorant of the Inner Path that begins from the Headquarters of the soul above the sensory plane and for which transcendence above the body-consciousness is the primary condition. It is there that one has "to knock" as Christ put it and vouchsafe that "It shall be opened." The philosopher Emerson, calls it as "tapping inside". In Ramkali War, Mohalla 5, we have a pen picture of the Masters of Apra Vidya or empirical knowledge of the world,—

He, while working for religious merit, takes upon himself a load of sins,
And goes abegging from door to door by offering initiation,
He himself has no faith in the Vedas and other scriptures,
And wants all worships and adoration unto himself,
Being a Kazi, he sits in judgement over others,
While telling the beads, he ventures to expound God-head,
With bribes, he tramples over the rights of others,
To the questions, he offers quotations from the scriptures." —Ramkali War M.1

We live in the tumultuous sea of life without any moorings and are carried along by the fearful currents of attachments and infatuations. A rare devotee of the Master may be able to successfully face the storm and stress and cross over to a haven of safety but the rest float down helplessly. If even after initiation an initiate takes recourse to disciplines and practices other than those enjoined by the Master, he cannot rid himself of worldly ties and takes a longer time to reach his Native Home.

"All are drowned in the love of the world,
A rare devotee of the Master may ferry across,
Because of attachments, one comes over time and again,

Entrapped in infatuation, one cannot but abide in the realm of death.
Even after initiation from a Master, people engage in rites and rituals,
Neither can they snap the bonds nor reach the goal,
It is His glance of grace that can pull down the mighty maze,
And then, O Nanak! one may get absorbed in Him." —Asa M.1

The true initiation is nothing but introduction to Naam and a contact with the live creative principle of Sound which can be listened to, actually experienced and practiced from day to day,—

"Only the predestined get in touch with a Master-soul,
With Water of Life, (Hari Ka Naam), He grants the true initiation (Deeksha)."
—Suhi M.1

"Live ye, in the haven of a Sadh,
And leave all thy wisdom and knowledge,
Let the Master's Words (Guru Deeksha) abide in thy heart,
This, O Nanak! may happen through the writ of the Lord." —Gauri M.5

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IX

Gyan or Jnana

Knowledge-Enlightenment

"Gyan or Jnana"

(Knowledge-Enlightenment)

The term 'Gyan' or 'Jnana' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Gna' which is equivalent to the English word 'know'. In common parlance, Gyan or knowledge is taken to mean as synonymous with thinking at the intellectual level and as such, it embraces within its fold, all bookish knowledge or knowledge recorded in and derived from books: ancient or modern, spiritual or secular. No doubt this too is a kind of Gyan or knowledge, but it is of an elementary kind, though very extensive, varied in character, and quite significant, as it goes. We have need of it as well. A part of it which is called scriptures constitutes the theory of the science of spirituality. Thus all scriptures, like the Vedas, the Upnishadas, the Gita, the Smritis, the Shastras, the Six Schools of Philosophy and the Puranas, the great Epic poems, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the holy Bible, the holy Qoran, the Adi Granth Sahib, and all other scriptures form part of this branch of knowledge and come within the purview of 'Apra Vidya' or the knowledge that comes through the senses. These form a wonderful record of the spiritual experiences of the Rishis of old and

inspire in us a longing to have for us similar experiences of our own. Besides, they contain ethical truths of great value, which pave the way for an ethical life, and if followed scrupulously, they lay a solid foundation, for a spiritual super-structure. So far, so good. But beyond this it is of no avail.

Apart from the above—the Apra Vidya—there is a higher and subtler type of knowledge which is gained at supra-mental level. It is quite independent of the knowledge gained through the ordinary senses as it is intuitive and an integral experience of the soul. Hence it is called Para Vidya or knowledge of the Beyond. In all religions it is spoken of and regarded as the real Gyan or knowledge of the right type. It is gained by the spirit or soul, when it reflects back upon itself. It is an outcome of self-analysis by a regular process of inversion or peeping within. It is a thing of actual experience and realisation within one's own self and gradually leads to self-knowledge and God-knowledge. When the light of self-knowledge dawns, all doubts and all differences vanish into vapoury nothing; one views the world in altogether a different setting, like a person standing on the summit of a hill, looking at the landscape around him and below him stretching in undulating endless series and himself an onlooker on the great panorama of life in its variegated

forms ; a centre, and a hub of the creation itself. The past, the present and the future unroll themselves before him, like an open book, and there is nothing that he does not know or feel the want of knowledge in himself. Now dawns upon him the truth of the great question—what is that thing the knowledge of which makes everything known—that has baffled mankind, since the world began. True Gyan or knowledge then lies in knowing and experiencing the Ultimate Reality in the Light and Life of which we blindly live, move about and have our very being rooted and yet know it not. It is a great irony of fate, that we know so much about the world and the worldly surroundings and have a surfeit of it, but know next to nothing of the vital motor-power—our very self, the Living-spirit, the life spark of consciousness that enlivens us and is our very life, called the soul.

Again there is a vast difference between Apra and Para Vidyas. The former goes on ever expanding as we proceed, but with no Way-out. Of it, Lord Alfred Tennyson speaks of,—

"Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move."

It is a kind of wilderness through which there is no way-out and hence no escape. A person

with all his wits about him, is sure to be lost in its labyrinthine maze. Like a flogging horse, he may kill himself with sheer exhaustion, but cannot possibly escape through unscathed. Such is the tortuous path, strewn with weeds and thorns on which the weary traveller trudges along with leaden feet with no half-way house to rest his tired limbs, ever on the march, ploughing the sands or furrowing the seas as the saying goes.

On the other hand, Para Vidya as well has boundless possibilities, ever unfolding new realms of celestial splendour, as the pilgrim soul proceeds on the Path. But it is a very pleasant journey, for the wayfarer has with him, a sure companion, and an unerring guide who knows the Path and its dangerous turns and twists. He safely takes him along, beguiles the ennui of the journey, shows him pleasant spots and makes him acquainted with all that comes in the way. His companion has a soft and smiling face, a radiant form, a divine dignity, about him and imparts to him a direct and first-hand knowledge of the Beyond, of which the pilgrim may have read a lot in books With all its sly traps, cunning turns and hidden slips, the Path moves through a belvedere of uncommon splendour and affords a sure way-out to a haven of rest and repose and the jounery's end is nothing but the Kingdom of God where peace and quiet

reign, a paradise on earth, a New Juresalem or the Holy City. Thus real Gyan or knowledge deals with Realised-truths, through a regular process of inversion and self-analysis.

In Gita, we come across two terms: Gyan and Vigyan. The knowledge of that one live-principle called Parmatma or God, is actively operating in all living creatures that appear and disappear like so many bubbles is called Gyan, and the realisation that the said live-principle is the material and efficient cause of all that exists is known as Vigyan. A person possessed of Gyan or Vigyan then actually sees nothing but God in his creation and creation as established in God, that is to say, the two as identical and not separate from each other: God-in-Man and Man-in-God, which is akin to the Pantheistic view of religion (identification of God with the Universe).

The Gurbani or the scriptures of the Gurus have nowhere identified book-learning with Gyan. On the contrary, the term Gyan is used significantly to denote the Sound-principle (as is evident from the terms employed, viz. Shabd, Naam, Sach, Kirtan, Dhuni and so on), which is ever reverberating in fullness in each individual.

"The Word of the Master is ever so sweet,
It is the true knowledge and meditation true,
Rare is the soul that may taste Its sweetness,
For grace of the Master makes It sweet.

—Gauri M.3

"Know ye the true knowledge and meditation,
as the Dhuni (Sound) Divine,
Blessed is the ever-green tree with an immense
shade." —Sri Rag M.I

We have need, a great need, for knowledge on the intellectual level as well, and that we get from scriptures and discourses from Master-minds. But we cannot practice spirituality unless we know, in the first instance, its theory: what spirituality is, what is its technique, how it can be practiced, what obstacles we meet in the way and how to overcome the same and so many other things besides. We cannot, therefore, ignore the theory aspect of Para-Vidya, or the Science of the Beyond, for theory always precedes practice in every branch of knowledge. But after having learnt the theory, one must put the theoretical knowledge into practice so as to make it our very own. Theory by itself cannot satisfy the innate craving of the spirit or soul which has to be fed on Manna or the heavenly food—the Bread of Life—to satiate her hunger and has to be supplied with the Water of Life, to quench her thirst. Theory and practice, therefore, go cheek by jowl and are inter-dependent. But to achieve the goal, one has to work for it and this requires stilling the mind and intellect before anything else. After a full comprehension of the knowledge, nothing remains but to gain practical experience of the

same at the level of the spirit far above the level of senses and sense organs. We have thus to separate the two by a process of self-analysis, by transcending the body-consciousness, a practical demonstration of which the Master gives in the laboratory of the body at the time of initiation :

" 'Jnana' or true knowledge with the Master is the Word and it comes through practice of the Word,
He alone gets this, who accepts and follows the instruction of the Master, with all his heart and soul." —Suhi M.4

"Jnana and meditation on Sach (Truth), have a very deep connotation,
No one knows of their inmost secret and their greatness." —Maru M.1

"Jnana, meditation, the divine Song (Dhun) and the Sound (Bani) are but one,
All, all repeat the same old story of the wondrous and the speechless One."
—Basant M.1

"Practice Jnana, meditation and Harmony by absorption in the Sound (Shabd),
Be ye one with Him who is beyond all limitations, peerless and without any fear."
—Parbhati M.1

"If you wish for a dip in the sacred pool, that pool is verily within you, of Naam ;
A true pilgrimage for the soul is Shabd which is replete with Jnana (Gyan)." —Dhanasri M.5

"The Master has applied to my eyes the collyrium of Jnana (Gyan),
The light became effulgent within and the darkness vanished." —Majh M.3

"Jnana with the Master is but Naam and he makes one steady in It,
One who is destined, gets It by devotion to the lotus feet of the Master." —Suhi M.4

"With the manifestation of light one becomes enlightened,
The light of Jnana has now been implanted in me by the Master;
By drinking the ambrosia of the Word (Naam), the mind is fully at rest and devoid of fear."
—Gauri M.5

"With the dawn of Jnana, there is light on every side,
In His boundless grace, He has accepted a filthy worm like me." —Gond Ravidas

This knowledge then is self-luminous. With it, there dawns an everlasting light in the soul of a person. Hereafter, he ever walks in God's kindly Light which accompanies him wherever he may be, in the burning desert-sands, on snow-capped mountains, in the far depths of the mighty seas or in the bowels of the earth. This is true devotion and one is fully protected from all harm.

The scriptures tell us that Jnana is characterised by the 'Light-principle'. Guru Amar

Das, speaking of Jnana, as taught by the Masters, describes It as 'Eternal Light Within', which serves as an altar for ceaseless devotion and grants one the full fruit of Naam,—

"The Master's Jnana brings forth eternal light within,
It keeps one absorbed in ceaseless devotion, the greatest gift of the all-pervading Word."
—Sorath M.3

"The devotee of the Master knoweth the Sound (Shabd),
And rests in the ambrosia of His Word (Naam).
The Master's Jnana is refulgent high,
And it drives away the darkness of ignorance."
—Sri Rag M.3

"In the company of a Sadh one gets company with Truth and the congregation sings His glory,
The scintillating Jnana sheds lustre within, dispelling all darkness born of ignorance."
—Asa M.4

"With the practice of Naam (Word), one is rid of all sorrow and pain, for It brings in, Supreme bliss,
The Jnana of the Master is all ablaze, filling one with light to the deepest depths of the soul." —Asa M.4

"Those with a writ of the Lord in their forehead, do meet a Master-saint,
And have all their doubt and distrust driven, by the blaze of Jnana." —Asa M.4

Guru Arjan also tells us that with the dawn of Master's Jnana within, there comes in Heaven's Light both within and without enveloping all and the mind gets satiated thereby and is freed from all illusions and delusions. One is thus led to the inexhaustible Fount of the Waters of Immortality, drinking which he becomes desireless and losing all fear of death gains Life Everlasting :

"With the Heaven's Light, all things get truly lighted as a result of the Jnana from the Master,
By drinking the Water of Life, the mind grows still and becomes fearless."

—Gauri M.5

In scaling spiritual heights, the pilgrim, in his journey Godwards, has actually to pass through the light of stars, the moon and the sun. This Knowledge or Enlightenment comes only when the spirit takes its course in the Sukhman or Shahrag, a central narrow channel between the two eye-brows.

To hail the light of the moon and the sun within, as the soul rises into the Astral world, is described by the scriptures as the Path of Jnana or True Knowledge :

"Inspite of fire in the core, how charmingly fragrant doth the vegetation look,
And so do the boistrous waters of the great seas when confined within their bounds,

The real sun and the real moon are both within the human body,
And yet one rarely gets to know true Jnana, the very soul of all that exists." —Basant M.I

Guru Nanak, in Jap Ji, stanzas XXXV and XXXVI, while telling us at length of the Realm of Divine Knowledge (Gyan Khand) with countless gods, goddesses and deities beautifully sums up the description, as:

"Divine knowledge illumines in the realm of knowledge,
While divine symphonies play unending music, and Joy and Bliss reign supreme."

The Heaven's Light always serves as an unfailing friend in moments of dire distress, both without and within and one walks steadily in It, in life here and hereafter. In Sukhmani, Guru Arjan has devoted a full Ashtpadi, a hymn in octave or 8 stanzas, in this context, and how It guides and leads the soul when it quits the body. The eternal light burns in the 'inverted well of the head' as Paltu Sahib puts it:

"In the inverted well of the head, there burns a lamp,
The lamp burns, without any wick or oil,
Through seasons six and round the clock it burns,
But none may see the light but through a sage divine."

In the Sukhman there is an effulgent light, but one cannot get an access thereto except through a Master-soul,—

"The light of Jnana is a powerful aid both within and without,
Commune with It O mind! as It destroys all affliction and sorrow." —Asa M.5

"The Light of Master's Jnana is a peerless jewel that grants salvation,
O Nanak! he may get It to whomsoever He wishes to grant the honour of His Court."
—Wadhans War M.3

"The Light of Jnana has been manifested within,
I have easily won the gift of the Word."
—Maru M.4

"Make a vintage of Jnana, and ferment it with meditation on the fire of His love and reverence,
The Sukhman is bubbling over with the Water of Life, drink ye to thy fill." —Ramkali·Kabir

"The Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my Path." —Psalms 119 : 105

The Master is knowledge personified and this knowledge He imparts to a rare Gurmukh, i.e., one who sits at His feet. A Satguru can manifest this Light which is capable of granting Nirban or Nirvan (Salvation). It is an inner science and one has to work for it under the guidance of a perfect Master without whom, no one has ever got it, nor can anyone get it.

"Ask of Brahma, Narad, Ved Vyas and others,
All do testify, none can have it but for a Master." —Sri Rag M.1

"Water doth stand in a pitcher and a pitcher without water is of no consequence,
The mind is wedded to Jnana, (knowledge) but True Jnana (Enlighted Sound) never comes without a Master-saint." —Asa War M.1

O Mother! one cannot get the light of Jnana without a Guru,
One may try all means, but one cannot get to the Lord." —Dev Gandhari M.5

"Without the Master, one cannot contact the Word nor find the Path,
The Light of Jnana is the true essence, for It leads Godwards." —Maru War M.3

"Without the Master one cannot have the Light of Jnana nor inner peace,
O Nanak! without Word, the worldly wise forfeits the human birth in vain."
—Sorath War M.3

"I offer myself as a sacrifice unto my Master, who has united me with the Lord,
He has applied to my eyes the collyrium of Jnana by His Word,
And with these eyes I now see the world in its true colours." —Asa War M.1

"The Master alone can give the collyrium of Jnana,
That shows the all-pervading Power of God."
—Gauri M.3

"The Master hath given me the collyrium of Jnana that has dispelled all darkness,

With the grace of God a saint is met,
O Nanak ! one witnesses the light within."

—Gauri Sukhmani M.5

The Light of True Knowledge is the greatest gift of a Master-soul,

"The Master has given me the greatest gift of Jnana by creating in me a craving for the Word (Naam),
He has linked me with Truth (the Power of God) a treasure-house of supernatural powers that grow from more to more."

—Sawaie M.5

When with spiritual discipline (Simran and Dhyan-constant repetition and concentration) the mind gets stilled and is at rest, then the enlightenment comes. Rare indeed are such souls in the world, for all those who are full of passions, anger or egoism, as most of us are, cannot have it. With it comes perfect satisfaction and satiation. Mind is controlled and soul awakens from the lethargic sleep of ages. All desires come to an end, and one gets absorbed in his own self, and is gifted with all-pervading prevision, transvision, and rises into Cosmic Awareness. All Karmas are burnt away. Death, the last enemy of mankind, loses its sting and the minions of death cannot come near such a Jivan-mukat or liberated being. These benefits cannot be had by outer intellectual wrestling.

Adorned with the kindly Light of God, the spirit becomes acceptable for the Lord-consort,—

"The wandering wits learn to live under control and delight in Truth,
And one drinks the Jnana Ras (the exhilarating vintage of Naam) and desires nothing else."
—Sri Rag M.1

"With all our washings of the body we cannot sweep it clean,
But the elixir of Jnana (the Word) purifies both the mind and the body right through."
—Sorath M.1

"The collyrium of Jnana destroys all fear and makes you see the Reality,
And ye gain omniscience with the stilling of the mind." —Sri Rag M.1

"Devotion to the Master creates love true and eternal,
And the gift of Jnana gives knowledge of the three worlds." —Sri Rag M.1

"Awakened into the light of Jnana, Kabir is dyed in the colour of the Lord,
All the world over are deluded, my mind is now metamorphosed by the all-pervading Power (Ram)." —Sri Rag Kabir

"How can one control the wandering wits?
The mind can be stilled through the grace of the Master and with Jnana returns to his Native Home." —Asa M.3

"Flower blossoms into fruit and then fades away,
All actions are for Jnana and then fall off."
—Bhairon : Bani Ram Das

"Nanak saith: He alone wakes up into the Reality,
He who applies the collyrium of Jnana to his eyes." —Bhairon M.3

"Jnana is a supreme embellishment for the bride, (soul),
Blessed is the bride that loves her Lord."
—Asa M.3

The wild elephant of the mind is controlled and domesticated by the Mahout of a Guru, by means of the Rod of Enlightenment. The Light of the Guru, variously called as Shabd, Naam or Dhun, forms a link between the soul and the Over-soul and once this 'Saving Life-line' is firmly grasped, one can easily transcend to the mansions of God.

"Put off the Old man and put on the new man, renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."
—Colossions 3 : 8-10

The agency that regenerates or transforms our nature, is the Holy Spirit. The experience which He must bring to us, is called the New Birth—the Resurrection or the Second Advent.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a New creature: old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become New."
—2 Corinthian 5 : 17

Jnana or Enlightenment comes as a gift from God :

"Thy glance of the grace gives one a right understanding,
And brings one to the crest-jewel of Jnana (Enlightenment)." —Asa M.1

"Search not Jnana in the world for verily ye shall not find It,
With the writ of the Lord, one gets It, and not by one's endeavours." —Asa War M.1

"Inside the body is the Jnana of the Master, a crest-jewel that grants salvation,
O Nanak ! with His glance of grace, He may grant It to whomsoever He may like and make him acceptable." —Wadhans War M.3

"Those who are devoted to the Satguru they are honoured and accepted in His Court,
The light of Jnana dawns in them to whom He may grant." —Sri Rag M.5

After having once been gifted with Enlightenment (or Jnana or Divine Knowledge and Experience), one must practice it from day to day so as to develep it and not to lose the holy light of heaven by sheer neglect in the mighty swirl of the world. St. Luke, in unambiguous terms, warns us against this danger of losing the peerless gift from God and His Elect, the God-man :

"Take heed that the Light which is in thee be not darkness." —St. Luke 11 : 35

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X

Charan Kamal

Lotus Feet of the Master

"Charan Kamal"

(Lotus Feet of the Master)

Very frequently, we come across the term 'Charan Kamal' in the sacredotal lore of various religions.

"Listen O simpleton! Learn to fall at the feet of a Guru." —Sri Rag M.I

"If your thoughts be centered on the feet of the Guru,
You will get all you desires fulfilled."
—Asa M.5

In the gospels also we find references to 'washing the feet of Jesus Christ.' Among the Hindus and the Mohammedans there is still the custom of doing obeisance by touching the feet of the divines and holy men. Let us try to understand the significance or import of injunctions and practices like these.

A living Master is a great necessity in the science of spirituality. He is the central figure round which the entire system revolves. He is the human pole through which the divine power works in this world. Without his guidance and help, one can do nothing and achieve nothing. No wonder then, that one has to surrender oneself at the holy feet of the Master. As Kamal or the lotus flower is considered to be some

thing sublime and sacred, the feet of the Master are generally spoken of as Charan-Kamal or the Lotus Feet, fit to be worshipped and adored in all sincerity and humility.

"Without the munificence of a Guru one gets naught,
No matter one may engage in myriads of meritorious deeds." —Maru M.3

"Set aside all thy wisdom and fall at the feet of a Guru." —Sri Rag M.5

"Be thou a dust of sadhus' feet and forget thyself altogether,
Leave all thy cunning and learning and fall at the feet of the Guru." —Sri Rag M.5

"Leave aside all thy wisdom and knowledge,
And fall at the feet of the Saints." —Gauri M.5

"Listen ye ignorant self, learn to fall at the feet of the Master,
Be ye devoted to the Word and then ye shall have no fear of death.
The unfortunate ones have a heavy load on their heads and can never be happy."
—Sri Rag M.1

"It is with a writ in the forehead that one communes with the precious Word,
And thy works shall be fashioned out by devotion to the Holy feet of the Master."
—Sri Rag M.5

"Think of the King of the kings—the Lord of Creation,

Depend on Him alone who is immanent in all;
Cast aside all thy artifices and get hold of the Master's feet." —Sri Rag M.5

"O dear self! thou would be blessed by devotion to the all-pervading power,
Serve day and night at the feet of the Master for that is the true devotion to the Lord."
—Sorath M.1

From exhortations like these of Guru Arjan, it is clear enough, that he wants us to find out a living Master and to surrender ourselves to him, to profit from his company and close association by moulding our life and conduct according to his pattern for in this lies the secret of spiritual success. "To contact the feet of a Guru," in this context, means to meet a Master soul and to enter his fold.

"Bow at the feet of His devotees." —Gauri M.5

"Remain ever in the company of the Saints,
And be devoted to the feet of the Master."
—Sri Rag M.5

"Blessed is the moment, when I see the Master,
Let me be a holocaust at the feet of the Master."
—Wadhans M.5

"I live simply to see you
And to do obeisance at your feet." —Suhi M.5

"I get constantly enlivened by seeing the Master,
And quench my thirst with the washings of his feet." —Gauri M.5

"I may ever live in the sweet remembrance of the Word and be blessed in body and mind;
Let me drink the washings of thy feet, O merciful Master divine.
Blessed indeed was the time, when I reached thy door O Lord;
O Nanak, God in His utmost mercy, led me to the door of the Perfect Master." —Suhi M 5

The feet of the Master are often spoken of as a pool of sacred nectar that grants salvation, to the world-weary pilgrims on the Path.

"Listen ye to the Saints, salvation lies in the true Word,
Service at the feet of the Master and devotion to His Word is the veritable pilgrimage.
Such a one is acceptable at His Court and gets a seat of honour." —Sri Rag M.5

Again there is surfeit of sweetness, strange and peculiar in the feet of the Master, and untold blessings flow therefrom.

"Sweet are the lotus feet of the Master,
With God's writ one sees them,
Myriads are the merits that follow such a blessed vision." —Todi M.5

The washings of their feet are taken to be an elixir of life by taking which, one gets life-eternal. To meet a Master-soul is no easy task. Really blessed is a person who has the good fortune to come across one and accept Him as such.

"O Nanak ! It is a mighty good-luck for one,
To cast aside pride and fall at Master's feet."
—Asa M.5

One may, through good fortune meet a living Master and get devoted to his lotus feet.
"O Nanak It is through fulness of Karmas, that One gets devoted to the feet of the Master."
—Asa M 5

"Nanak saith: Blessed I am,
That I serve the feet of a Sadh." —Gauri M.5

It is with the grace of God that one gets an opportunity to meet a living Master and have a loving devotion for His feet :
"God linked me with a Saint,
And I found a boon companion,
And acquired love for His feet." —Asa M.4
"On whomsoever God showers His mercy,
He begins washing the feet of a Satgtru."
—Gauri War M.4
"God has graced me with His mercy,
The feet of the Master are now implanted in me." —Majh M.5

Blessed is the day from whence a person engages in the service of the Master's feet and bows in all humility before him and touches his lotus feet with his forehead and beard :
"Blessed are the eyes that see the Master's Form,
Blessed the forehead that touches his feet."
—Gauri M.5

"Blessed is the day that I met the Master,
And did obeisance at his feet." —Gauri M.5
"Blessed are the beards that touch his feet."
—Shalok M.3

Bhai Gurdas in this context, saith :

"Through ages one has had a human birth,
But blessed is the life wherein one takes refuge at the Master's feet,
Blessed are the eyes that behold the Master,
Blessed the ears that hear the Master,
Blessed the nose that smells the fragrance of His feet,
Blessed the tongue that repeats the words of the Master,
Blessed the hands that serve the Master,
Blessed the feet that circumambulate the Master." —Kabit 17

"Refuge at the feet of the Master has in it the merit of myriads of pilgrimages,
Even the gods and goddesses are eagerly engaged in the service of the Master ;
Refuge at the feet of the Master brings about fruition of all desires.
All supernatural powers flow from him and so doth immortality ;
Refuge at the feet of the Master takes to the region of desirelessness.
Devotion as enjoined by him works out salvation from bondage ;
Refuge at the feet of the Master has a merit that is inconceivable,

He works without any thought and is the potential cause (material and efficient) of all that exists." —Kabit : 72

"Since the time I took refuge at the feet of the Master
All the world seems engaged in worshipping at his feet ;
His lotus feet constitute a pool of the Water of Life (Charan-Amrit),
I wish and long for the dust of his feet—the dust that has created the Universe.
His lotus feet are the true wealth and a true haven of peace,
They grant ineffable vision and lead to the Path Godwards ;
His lotus feet have glory that is indescribable and incomprehensible,
Not this, not this, I bow to thee again and again O Lord." —Kabit : 217

It is really a great blessing to have a living Master. We have in the scriptures, countless merits that accrue from the lotus feet of the Master. He dispels all our sorrows and afflictions. One is rid of the deadly sins of lusts and passions, attachments and desires. The body and mind both get purified. Freed from all bondage, one takes life, as it flows by, unfettered and unaffected, fearless of what may come, not even death itself which he knows how to meet more than halfway. With the power of the Word, he leads a life of perfect contentment and

ecstasy and rises into Universal Consciousness and hereafter lives at all time at the level of the soul. This is Jiwan-Mukti or Salvation in life, as it is called.

"Blessed is the time I see the Master,
And make an offering of myself at His feet."
—Wadhans M.5

"A true Satguru is a great Donor,
When I see him all my ills vanish ;
His lotus feet are worthy of adoration."
—Sarang M.5

"I adore the feet of the Satguru,
Guru is the helmsman
And His Word the barque to cross over."
—Asa M.1

"A glance of grace from the Satguru is more than millions of kingships ;
The moment He manifests the Word, my body and mind feel exhilarated.
But it is with the writ of God that one gets devoted to the feet of the Satguru."
—Sri Rag M.5

"Whatever the condition, sitting or standing I sing the virtues of the Lord and my sorrows and afflictions disappear.
Nanak saith : It is with the the fullness of Karmas that the mind gets attached to the feet of the Master." —Sorath M.5

"All things are added unto him, who casts a loving look at the Master ;

Those whose minds are fixed in the feet of the Master, are truly blessed." —Sri Rag M.5

"Nanak saith : If it be so ordained,
Leave all pride and be engaged in the feet of the Master." —Asa M.5

"Blessed are those whom the Satgur has accepted,
Nanak is ever attached to the feet of the Master." —Asa M.1

"As ye sow, so shall ye reap and reap the seeds sown in the ages past,
On whomsoever He showers His mercy, he washes the feet of the Satgur."
—Gauri War M.4

Inner Vision of the Master's Feet

A Living Master is not a physical entity alone. He is an active live principle that transcends at will the physical plane and traverses into Higher Spiritual regions. The Radiant Form of the Master called Guru Dev guides and helps the human soul as it gets extricated from the trammels of the flesh, by means of Simran or repetition of the charged words, given by the Master. In subtle region, the spirit is enabled to stay by the magnetic influence of Divya-rup (Radiant Divine Form) of the Guru. Hence the necessity for devotion at the sacred feet of the Inner Radiant Form as well.

"Keep the Feet of the Master, ever engraven in thy heart.

Thou shalt have all thy wishes fulfilled."

—Asa M.5

"Let the remembrance of the Master's feet abide in thy mind,
All thy sufferings shall vanish and thy enemies be destroyed." —Gauri M.5

"Let the remembrance of the Master's feet abide in thy mind
And thou shalt be saved from the hell fires."

—Gauri M.5

"The feet of the Master are manifest in my forehead,
This is why all my trials and tribulations have now ended." —Gauri M.5

"The blessed form of the Master is manifest in my forehead,
Whenever I peep within, I find Him there in the forehead.
His lotus feet are the source of my very life."

—Dev Gandhari M.5

The entire Radiant Form of the Master as it appears within is blessed indeed. The divine light emanating from the feet of the Master is resplendent and is the first to dawn and with it comes the entire form. As a harbinger of the Divine Presence, it is fit to be worshipped and loved with devotion. From stage to stage this Holy-light grows in lustre. Gosain Tulsi Das, the famous author of the Hindi Ramayana, spoke of it as :

"The nails of the Master's feet are more lustrous than the shining crest-jewel. A concentration on them opens the inner vision and one becomes all-knowing."

Maulana Rumi also speak of it :

"When the Pir (Master) appears within, you become knower of the past, present and furture."

This is tantamount to what is technically called 'Fana-fil-Sheikh' or merging one's identity in or becoming one with the Murshid or the Master. Hereafter the duality between the disciple and the Master ceases and they become one in spirit. He truly becomes a Guru-man. The Astral Form of the Master appears when one rises above the body-consciousness. When the sensory currents (or consciousness), through the process of Simran, collect at the centre between the two eyebrows the light sprouts forth and when one goes ahead this Radiant Form manifests itself. So long as this Divine Form of the Master does not come to guide, one cannot march on the spiritual Path and gain the Kingdom of Heaven, for Guru precedes God and leads us Godwards. This Radiant Form ever remains with the disciple, no matter where he may be— in the thick forests, mountain fastnesses, burning desert-sands or snowy mountain tops and helps the pilgrim-spirit on the Path ; leads her beyond the Trigun-atmic regions—*viz.*,

physical, the subtle and the causal, and takes her to the Fourth Grand Division called Sat Lok, which is purely a spiritual realm.

"The feet (Light) of the Master shine in my forehead,
No more I am a prey to trials and tribulations."
—Gauri M.5

"Blessed form of the Master is ever present in my forehead.
Every moment as I took up, I do behold the Divine Form.
And now I live and breathe by the grace of the Master's lotus feet." —Dev Gandhari M.5

"Blessed indeed is the human body in which dwell the feet of the Beloved."
—Dhanasri M.5

The manifestation of the Guru Dev or the Astral Form of the Master, is purely a gift of God. By the Divine grace alone, initiates are blessed with this precious gift.

"I am enraptured with seeing the lotus feet of the Radiant Form of the Master,
It is by the grace of the Master that one comes to serve the Lord." —Bilawal M.5

The Lotus Feet of God (Naam):

We have pertinent allusions in the scriptures to God's feet as well, e.g.,—

"Contact thou the feet of Hari
Through the Guru's Shabd, shalt thou know."
—Gujri M.3

"Meditate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord."

—Todi M.5

There is in fact no difference whatsoever between the Lotus Feet of the Lord and of the Master. But what for, the words, "Lotus Feet" do stand and what do they signify ? These words connote nothing more nor less than the 'Sound-principle' called Dhuni, Naam, Kalma or Word, emanating from the Highest Region, and passing through various grades of density, reverberates at the lowest level of the subtle plane at the centre between the two eyebrows, with which the Master-soul links the spirit at the time of initiation.

"Wonderful is the Harmony of God,
By devotion to the Lotus Feet of the wondrous Lord one beomes a Sadhu." —Sarang M.5

Here the term is synonymous with the "Sound-current" which manifests Itself through the grace of some Master-soul, and by attuning with which one becomes a Sadh (a disciplined soul).

"Should you live with a Saint for sometime,
A tuneful strain of soft music appears of itself."

—Majh M.5

"Cutting asunder all bonds, one gets established in the Lotut Feet,
And remains absorbed in the Sound-current."

—Ramkali M.5

In the terminology of Saints, devotion to the Word is devotion to the lotus feet of the

Master and those who get absorbed in the Harmony of the Word they drink the Water of Life proceeding from the Lotus Feet of the Lord. In fact the reference here is to the 'Sonorous light' which emanating from the feet of the Master welcomes the pilgrime soul as it proceeds on its journey Homewards through the Astral and Subtle regions.

"Nanak prayeth : Make me a slave of such votaries who are absorbed in Thy Lotus Feet." —Gujri M.5

Again, when through spiritual Sadhana, the Kindly Light of God dawns within, that too is described as the Lotus Feet of the Lord, since it emanates from His Feet and is the dust of His Feet (Charan Dhur).

"The moment His Feet are firmly established within,
A light dawns and one meets the Lord."
—Asa M.5

Naam or Word is the fountain-head of Heaven's Light. Devotion to the Naam is nothing but devotion to His Feet.

"While walking or sitting, wakeful or asleep,
Be in tune with the Word (the Guru Mantar),
Be devoted to His Feet in the company of a Saint and thus cross over the sea of life."
—Maru M.5

The Greatness of the Lotus Feet is the Be-all and End-all. It is the *Summum Bonum* of life.

"In the bliss of His holy feet, I remain absorbed from end to end." —Shalok Kabir

One cannot describe the beatitude of His Feet. But one can experience and feel something of the bliss arising therefrom :

"O Kabir with what should I compare the Bliss of the Lotus Feet,
Words fail to do any justice, but one can be convinced by having some experience of It."
—Shalok Kabir

By remaining in constant touch with Light and Sound-current, one can always be devoted to the Lotus Feet and derive untold benefits therefrom.

"Who depend on the lotus feet of the Master,
All the time they are absorbed in the Word."
—Majh M.5

"They that live by the lotus feet depend on One alone,
God is their only refuge, the woof and warp of their existence." —Dhanasri M.5

"My comrade, friend and guide is the Most High,
His Lotus Feet within me are my very life."
—Asa M.5

"His Lotus Feet are my support,
He is the treasure-house of all Bliss,
Let me be engaged in His Kirtan,
So long as the life-breath lasts." —Bilawal M.5

"Thy Feet are helmsmen to ferry across the sea of life." —Gauri M.5

"With Thy feet, thou hath ferried many across the world." —Wadhans M.5

"The mind rides in safety in the ship of Hari Charan." —Asa M.5

The Lotus feet appear in the depths of mind :

"To listen the Kirtan (Word) is the daily routine of a Sadh,
When the Lotus Feet become fully manifest within, one lives by constant devotion to them. —Sarang M.5

"With Lotus Feet within, I meditate on them all the time." —Dev Gandhari M.5

He alone engages in the worship of the Lotus Feet to whomsoever God may grant.

"All are strung like beads on one string,
He alone takes shelter of the 'Feet' who is so destined." —Majh M.5

"By Thy glance of grace attract us to Thy feet." —Asa M.5

The wealth of the Lotus Feet, comes as a gift from the Satguru and he himself makes them manifest :

"One engages in the devotion of the Lotus Feet,
If one gets the gift of the Feet from a Satgur." —Asa M.5

"I offer myself a scrifice at the Holy Feet,
And a sacrifice unto the Master for showing them to me." —Sarang M.5

"The Master hath given me the wealth of the Lotus Feet,

And the unmoored has found a sheet anchor."

—Sri Rag M.5

It is through association with Sadhus and Saints that the 'Lotus Feet' appear within :

"The Sadhus and Saints manifest the Heaven's Light,
And the Lotus Feet do manifest within."

—Parbhati M.5

How the 'Lotus Feet' come to abide in the mind ? It is through Simran that the 'Lotus Feet' do appear.

"The Simran of God drives away all afflictions,
And the Lotus Feet do appear in the mind.
Meditate on the all-pervading Word, all the time,
And drink the Water of Life, O loved of the Lord." —Gauri M.5

"Sing of the virtues of the Lord with the Saints and waste not the precious life ;
By singing the praises of the Lord, one not only saves himself (from the wilderness of life) but even those who are his kith and kin ;
The 'Lotus Feet' have now come to abide in my mind and I meditate on them all the time,
Nanak hath taken his shelter with God and hath offered his all unto Him."

—Dev Gandhari M.5

When the all-pervading consciousness in man which is operating through sensory-currents, gets collected and concentrated through spiritual

Sadhana, at one centre, the seat of the soul, just between and behind the two eyebrows; the Lotus Feet or Naam becomes manifest. The spirit gets so much absorbed in the tuneful strains that one is lost to himself and an indissoluble union between the soul and the Oversoul is effected. Face to face with Reality, he gets so much established therein that hereafter world loses all its charms and cannot move him from his purpose.

The lotus feet of the Master are wondrously luminous. A rare Sadhu with a mighty good fortune may have the luck to cast his eyes on them. These do appear in the heart of the devotee, behind the two eyebrows.

"A rare Sadhu may fall in love with the Lotus Feet of the Lord." —Asa M.5

"The Lotus Feet do appear within the mind of a devotee." —Majh M.5

If one gets in touch with the Lotus Feet, he attracts to himself the merit of all austerities, pilgrimages and acts of charity and devotion.

"A meditation on the 'Lotus Feet' of the Lord grants the merits of all devotional exercises and disciplines." —Sri Rag M.5

"Meditate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord
This is the greatest pilgrimage and an act of ablution." —Gauri M.5

"Meditate day and night on the Word and drink ambrosia,

It shall give thee the benefit of all virtuous deeds and yogic exercises."

—Ramkali M.5

"The whole world is in the throes of lusts, passions and egotism,
A shelter with a Saint and a devotion at His feet will dispel all troubles born of ignorance."

—Sri Rag M.5

"A whole-hearted devotion to the feet of the Master saves one of all pangs and sorrows."

—Suhi M.5

"Leave off all worldly comforts and embellishments of no consequence,
All passions and all delights take to their heels once you get to the feet of the Satgur."

—Asa M.5

"By killing egotism the mind gets subdued,
And one loves the Master's feet forever,
By the Master's grace, the body and the mind are purified;
And one communes with the holy Word."

—Majh M.3

"Let my body and soul be a sacrifice unto the all-absorbing feet of the Master;
Satguru is a veritable pool of Nectar, and His Word rids the mind of all imperfections."

—Majh M.3

"The mind linked with the feet of the Master,
Leaves the path of death far behind."

—Sorath M.1

"As ballast in the boat moves across the river,
So doth a devotee to the Master safely cross the sea of life." —Gauri M.5

"By devotion to the feet of the Master, I live by remembering Hari,
By meditation on the Par Braham I drink, the Amrit." —Bilawal M.5

"Wheresoever I see I find myself at The Feet,
May I be a sacrifice to Thy Feet."
—Bhairon M.5

"The devotion to the True One is ever wonderful,
By meditating on the Master's feet one gains the highest merit." —Gauri M.1

Charan-Kamal-Dhur
(Dust of the Lotus Feet)

The phrase 'Charan Dhur' has also been used in the scriptures alternately with 'Charan Kamal' and both signify the same thing.

A. The Dust of the Feet of Living Masters.

As the need of a living Master is of supreme importance so is the need of the dust of His feet. Whatever comes in contact with the Divine Human Pole is indeed very blessed : the hem of His garments, the saddle He sits upon ; the horse He rides on, the things He uses for one purpose or another. Many a person cured themselves of fell diseases like leprosy or blindness by touching the hem of Christ's apparel.

"The entire world is Thine my Lord,
Everyone eagerly seeks for the Dust of Thy Feet." —Malar M.4

"The service of Thy Feet is a panacea for all ills,
Even the angels and the seraphims wish for Thy Dust." —Bhairon M.5

"Blessed indeed is the place which a Saint treads upon,
The Rishis like Shankar, Narad pay homage to it." —Kalyan M.4

"Wherever a Sadhu stalks the land,
The entire region becomes purified."
—Kalyan M.4

Shamas Tabriz, a Master Saint tells us :

"With the Dust of a Saint, enlighten thine eyes,
Then shalt thou see all from end to end,
Make for thee a collyrium from the dust of the Elect ;
It shall make thee pure and also renovate thy sight, (enabling thee to see God)."

Wheresoever God's elect sets up his habitat, that becomes sanctified and in course of time grows into a place of pilgrimage. In fact all sacred places owe their origin to the sanctifying influence of one or other holy man of God. The sanctity of Nankana Sahib, Panja Sahib and Kartarpur, for instance, is due to Guru Nanak who was closely associated with these places. Amritsar or the Pool of Nectar owes its origin to Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjan. Similarly,

Mecca and Medina owe their spiritual influence to Hazart Mohammed. The importance of the holy city of Jerusalem is because of Jesus Christ. Again Banaras, Hardwar and Allahabad on the banks of Ganges, where Rishis of old sat in meditation, have captured the imagination of Hindus who throng these places from year to a year to gain religious merit. Sarnath & Budh Gaya etc. are still honoured because of Lord Buddha. Their relics are revered even by the heads of States and monuments are raised to preserve them. The God's elects never stand in need of holy places. On the contrary the sanctity of all such places is due to them. Verily a Godman is a moving place of pilgrimage.

"It is not the places that grace men but men the places." —St. Agesilaus

"All the places of pilgrimage set up after the various gods and goddesses pine for the dust of Sadhu's feet,

All, all wish for a devotee of the Lord so as to be blessed with the feet of a Sadhu."

—Malar M.4

"The sacred Ganges, The Jumna, The Godavari and the Saraswati all strive for the dust of Sadhus' feet,

As this dust alone can purify them of the enormity of sins left over by the sinners."

—Malar M.4

In the dust of Saints' feet, one can find merits of all the sixtyeight places of pilgrimage :

"Through the mercy of the Saint, infatuation and delusion are swept off,
A smearing with the dust of the Sadhus is the most meritorious." —Gauri M.4
"With true Word there comes in perfect satiety,
In the dust of a Saint there is the merit of all pilgrimages." —Asa M.5
"The sight of a Saint grants one perfect vision,
The dust of a Sadhu has the merit of ablution at sacred pools." —Gauri M.5
"The light of the myriads of Crest Jewels is of no consequence,
And so also the lustre of millions of suns and moons is of no value,
As compared to the scintillating light of him in whom He dwells,
And this happens only when countless merits earned in past lives fructify together,
Siva, Sanakadic (Sanak, Sanandan, Sanat Kumar) and Brahma also wish for the company of such a noble soul,
And he obtains the merit of all the pilgrimages,
In whose forehead shines the light of His sight,
The sight of His lotus feet flaming his forehead."
—Kabit Savai 421

The merit of visiting all the holy places of itself comes to a person who bows in humility to a living Saint. It is because of the dust of their feet, that a person rises in Cosmic

Awareness, and becomes a theist in the true sense of the word.

"Kind and Gracious Lord has become visible,
And Nanak doth live by the dust of His Saints."
—Dhanasri M.5

"Nanak ever prays for the gift of Saints' dust,
Nothing else doth he want from the Lord-giver."
—Bihagra War M.4

"It is a great good fortune to have the dust of Saints,
O Nanak, by devotion to the Master, one worships the Lord." —Gauri M.5

"Make me of lowly mind, my saintly friend, your mercy has made me fortunate enough,
I have had extreme bliss, ineffable,
Nanak is now gifted with the dust (light emanating from the feet of the Master)."
—Malar M.5

"In the world of Thy creation, my Lord,
All seek the dust of Thy devoted Sadhus,
O Nanak ! he, who is so destined,
Gets the dust of Sadhu (light of his feet) and is safely carried across." —Malar M.4

"Thou art the support of Thy devotees from times out of mind,
Nanak ever craves for the dust of their feet,
O grant it, the Munificent Lord."
—Dev Gandhari M.5

"O Knower of all the hearts, complete within Thyself,

Grant unto me the boon of Sadhu's dust."
—Wadhans M.5

"The dust of Thy devotee is wondrous sweet,
He alone gets it, who holds the writ from Thee." —Gauri M.5

"With a mighty good fortune one gets from the Saints the gift of dust (light),
It is by devotion to the Master that one gets absorbed in the Lord." —Gauri M.4

"Fortunate is he who secures the dust of a Satguru,
Nanak would ever like to sacrifice himself unto such a Master." —Suhi M.5

"Blessed is he, who makes friend with a Sadhu,
Nanak seeks the dust of such devotees, may He grant the same." —Sarang M.5

I would like to adorn my forehead with the dust of devotees of the perfect Satgur,
O Nanak! the gift of dust from them comes through a great good fortune, to those alone who remain absorbed in the holy Word."
—Bhairon M.3

B. Inner dust of the Masters' Radiant Form.

The holy light that emanates from the feet of the Radiant Form of the Master, on the Astral Plane is often described as the dust of their feet.

"Partake of the bread of life in the precious immortal Naam,
And smear thy forehead with the dust of the Saints." —Sorath War M.4

Sant Tulsi Das Ji speaks of it :—

"Take care to retain attention within the two eyebrows,
Purifying the mind and body fix thy gaze at one centre,
Then shalt thou penetrate into the Beyond seeing the Reality face to face,
O Tulsi, the dust of the Saints, spreads before thee a carpet of Light."

C. Inner dust: What it is ?

In the Sikh scriptures It is described as Eternal and Everlasting Naam or Word—the Sound-current.

"Nanak prays for the Sadhu's dust,
It is the precious Naam of God." —Dhanasri M.5

"I would like to make my hair a tasselled fly-drive for the Saints,
And bow in adoration unto them at the Til (still-point in the body where His Radiant Form appears) and adorn my face with their Dust (light)." —Suhi M.5

This dust of Saints is in every one of us. We live by the Light of God within, technically known, as Charan Dhur or Dust of the Feet. It has in it the Sound principle or the Harmony—the active life-principle that grants life everlasting.

The dust of the Lord's feet is a peerless gift that one can pray for and seek. The gods and goddesses, Rishis and Munis long for It.

"I have adorned my forehead with the Dust of the Lord (Heaven's Light)
Even the Rishis, Munis, and the gods are far removed from It." —Dhanasri Namdev

In the 'Dust of the Sadhus' lies the merit of myriads of pilgrimages, fasts, and vigils and and countless yogic disciplines.

"One can acquire the merit of myriads of pilgrimages and yogic practices if one is able to secure the gift of dust from a Sadhu (Inner Light)." —Sri Sag M.5

Alongside the "Dust of Saints' feet", we have references about the 'Dust of Gur-sikhs' feet'; that is of the true Sikhs or devoted disciples of the Master.

"The lowly Nanak asks for the dust of the dovoted disciples of the Master (Gur-sikh)
Who himself practices the holy Word and instructs others to do the same."
—Gauri War M.4

This dust (Light and Sound of God) is an elixir of life that grants salvation—a life of bliss both here and hereafter.

Charan Dhur : Its Merits.

1. It rids one of all pains and sorrows, and the grief of separation.

"They alone are rich, O Lord (complete and perfect as Thou art) who practice the Word under the guidance of a Master,

Poor Nanak asks for the 'Dust of a Sadhu' for
It rids the mind of all pains, sorrows and grief." —Asa M.4

"All ills vanish, pains and sorrows depart,
When one is purified by the dust of the Saints."
—Asa M.5

"All ills have taken leave, now that I have tasted of the 'Dust of a Saint'.
It sanctifies the sinner in no time by dispelling the darkness of ignorance."
—Ramkali M.5

2. It casts off lusts, and egotism :

"Take a daily dip in the dust of the Master,
It would wash off the egotism of ages upon ages."
— Gauri M.5

"Besmear your face and forehead with the dust of a Sadhu and rid yourself of the filth of lust and fury.
See the Light of God even in the pariah and wish well to all." —Dev Gandhari M.5

3. It sanctifies the mind by destroying sins and removing the accumulated filth of ages :

"My perfect Satgur I have taken shelter with Thee, as
The mind gets rarefied with the dust of the Saints." —Wadhans M.5

"The eyes are purified by Thy sight, and the hands when they are engaged in service ;
The heart is purified by Thy presence within and the forehead by the dust of the Saints."
—Sarang M.5

"The sacred waters of the Ganges, Jumna, Godavari and Saraswati strive for the dust of the Sadhus (outer dust) ;

We, filled with all ills and egotism can also be purified by the dust of the Sadhus, (Inner Dust)." —Malar M.4

"A dip in the dust of the devotee's feet washes down the ill of ages upon ages." —Kanra M.5

"Besmear the dust of Saints on your forehead,

And cleanse yourself of the ills of past ages."

—Ramkali M.5

4. It fulfills all wishes and desires and even the innate latencies of the mind :

"The contact with the feet of the Master awakens Reality and fulfills all desires.

The dust of the Saints is wish-yeilding and brings about union with the Lord."

—Bilawal M.5

"In His great mercy, God has brought to me a perfect Master,

All my heart's desires have now been fulfilled with the dust of the Master." —Gauri M.4

5. It is the harbinger of peace and bliss, grants freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, saves one from the angel of Death :

"After long and ceaseless wanderings, I have come unto Thee Hari Rai, the Destroyer of all fear ;

The devotees get bliss through the dust of Sadh and Nanak too has been so blessed."

—Gujri M.5

"Be in communion with the holy Word, for that is the true devotion;

The company of the Saints puts an end to births and deaths, O Nanak this is the virtue of their dust." —Gauri M.5

"Obeisance unto Him the Saviour, who got us absorbed in Him,

A bath in the 'Dust of a Sadhu', O Nanak! bestows innumerable blessings."

—Parbhati M.5

"Their very sight is the source of a great bliss,

And their 'Dust' rescues one from death."

—Ramkali M.5

"Nanak saith: He who secures the Saint's Dust within,

The angel of Death even cannot come near him." —Gauri M.5

6. It helps in saving millions of souls and one becomes Jiwan-Mukta:

"Besmear the face and forehead with the dust of a Sadhu,

O Nanak! Thus saved, sing the praises of the Lord." —Suhi M.5

"Grant unto me the devotion of the Master O Satgur, so that I may remain absorbed in the all-pervading Word.

Grant me the 'Dust' of a perfect Master; O Lord so that the sinners like me too may rest in Thee, freed from all bondage."

—Suhi M.3

"Dyed in the colour of the Lord my mind sings of the Lord,
Salvation comes from the dust or the Word of a Sadhu." —Parbhati M.5
"God be merciful to poor Nanak, and
Grant unto him the dust of the Sadhus so that he may be saved." —Bilawal M.5

7. It opens the inner vision wherewith one sees and witnesses the all-pervading Power of God, everywhere :

"I crave for the 'Dust' of Thy devotees
By practice of the Word, O Nanak, God Himself becomes visible." —Basant M.5
"In the 'Dust of the Sadhu', one witnessess the presence of God around him."
—Basant M.5

8. It gives bliss here and hereafter and one is honoured in His Court :

"Whosoever dedicates his life to the service of the Lord (Hari),
And with full faith has besmeared his face with the dust of a Sadh-Guru
Shines in the glory of the Lord both here and hereafter and is imbued with the intoxication to the core of his heart."
—Jaitsri M.4
"Those who adorn themselves with the Dust of a Sadhu,
They turn their back on the world and turn to the Word,

They are honoured in His Court and their faces shine with glory." —Gauri M.4

"In the Court of God they sit in honour and glory,
The lowly Nanak prays for the Dust of such devotees of the Master." —Gauri War M.4

9. It grants the bliss of Sahaj :

"O Nanak in the 'Dust of the devotee' there is the bliss of Sahaj and extreme ecstasy ;
All things get straightened by themselves by devotion to the perfect Master." —Asa M.5

10. It affects union with Truth :

"Live in devotion to the feet of a Sadh,
Besmear your body with the dust of his feet,
Serve him with all your mind and soul,
Then shall you reach the True Homeland."
—Asa M.5

It grants conquest over death and all the deadly sins drop off by themselves. Nature the hand-maid of God becomes a bounden slave. With the inner vision opened, one sees God everywhere and spends his days happily in His beneficent presence, a Conscious Co-worker with Him.

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Appendix

ADDENDA

to evidences from various religions in the portion under 'Naam'

Here below we append some more extracts from scriptures which throw light on the importance of the twin principle of Light and Sound—the primordial manifestation of the Great Being, the Absolute Unmanifest.

"Meditation on Nad or the Sound Principle is the royal road to salvation."

—Hansa Nad Upnishad.

Extracts from Jainism on Light and Sound Principle

There are mainly two ways of Vidya :—

(i) **Agh Drishta** meaning Apra Vidya, for the layman for physical happiness.

(ii) **Yog Drishta** or Para Vidya which speaks of something above the senses.

There are Stages of Yoga. Jainism divides them in 8 stages. Yoga helps you to know yourself and attain Perfection. The eight stages of Yoga are:—

1. **Mitra**—Vision is very dim. It can be compared to light of grass particles which is momentary and extremely dim. The Yogi in this stage adopts vows of Non-Violence, Truth, Celibacy etc. To him all living beings are

friends. He bears ill will to none. He finds great happiness in good thoughts and good deeds; but it is not possible in this stage to go much higher.

2. **Tara**—Vision here is also dim, compared to the light of cowdung cake, although vision is a little better, but it is momentary and dim. One adopts short-term rules for purification. He becomes purer in his relations with outside world also. He busies himself in reading of books of great seers. He feels great interest in all that is helpful in raising the soul higher.

3. **Bala**—Vision here is also dim compared to woodlight. *Asanas* are performed. He can easily do *Padmasan* etc. but it is not external *Asanas* which are aimed at but the spiritual *Asanas*. He becomes firm in external *Asanas* but he experiences glimpses of spiritual happiness. He rises a little above the body.

4. **Dipra**—is compared to light of *Deepak* or candle light. Here he attains *Pranayam* not only externally but internally also. He has now firm faith that it is the soul which is to be called for primarily. To save the soul he may even give up his body. To attain purification of soul, he is prepared to face any dangers and difficulties. His leaning is more and more towards soul. He attains peace not known before.

5. **Sthira**—is considerably bright and lasting compared to the light of jewel. He sees the

world and worldly things in proper perspective. Strong likes and dislikes have disappeared. He becomes composed and calm and realizes and feels that he is not body but he is some Divine element residing within. He is soul and he feels the difference. He feels his body different from soul. *He gets the sound from within of various wonderful tunes which attunes one with Samadhi.* Desires of body and senses are not liked by him. He has full faith in God, in the pure form of the soul, and he is yearning to be pure, absolutely pure.

6. **Kanta**—can be compared to light of star. Here there is great control over mind. The mind finds happiness in devotion to God, in love and meditation of pure soul. Mind becomes steady in these higher things and finds no pleasure in physical happiness and amenities. Here he becomes so pure that he can get vision of of *Siddhas*—liberated souls, great souls. His actions also become so pure that he is loved even by great Saints.

7. **Prabha**—can be compared to light of sun. It is bright and strong. Here right knowledge has grown immensely and meditation becomes his second nature and he finds innermost happiness. He is screne, he has great control over his senses and mind.

8. **Para**—can be compared to the light of moon, serene, peaceful and cool. Here

meditation reaches highest pitch and he becomes immersed in it. He attains Samadhi (*Sama*) and becomes faultless. His state can be compared to full Moon in all its Splendour.

—Yoga Drishta Samuchaya
by Sri Haribhadiacharya.

Excerpts from Jain scriptures :

"Tapas itself is the light and it shines forth in the human body."

—Suttagame Part II, Page 996, Gatha 44 by Puppha Bhikkoo.

"When the knowledge finds an anchorage in Knowledge, there flashes forth light."

—Samayassar

"The aspirant is enjoined to sit in solitude and meditate with a single-pointed attention, on the Maha Mantra of Panch parmesti and to perceive the light." —Shri Sutra Nandi

"Hearing the sound resembling that of the conch and witnessing the Lotus Light like that of a newly blossomed flower between the two eye-brows, one faces his *Ishta*, the Satguru."

—Suttagame, Part II, Page 1046, Edition 1954 by Puppha Bhikkoo.

Extracts from Baha-ism

Here are a few extracts taken from the "Hidden Words" of Baha-Ullah, a mystic saint of Persia,—

O Son of Love !

"Thou art but one step away from the glorious heights above and from the celestial tree of

love. Take thou one pace and with the next advance into the Immortal Realm and enter the Pavilion of Eternity. Give ear then to that which hath been revealed by the pen of glory."

O Essence of Negligence!

"Myriad of mystic tongues find utterance in one speech, and myriads of mysteries are revealed in a single melody; yet, alas! there is no ear to hear, nor heart to understand."

O children of Negligence and Passion!

"...Open your ears that ye may hearken unto the Word of God, the help in peril, the Self-Existent."

O son of Dust!

"...hearken unto the mystic voice calling from the Realm of the Invisible."

O son of Being!

"Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee..... I have created thee rich.....and within thee have I placed the essence of My light."

O son of Spirit!

"...Alas! How strange and pitiful, for a mere cupful, they have turned away from the billowing seas of the Most High, and remained far from the most effulgent horizon."

O offspring of Dust!

"...up from thy prison ascend unto the glorious meads above, and from thy mortal cage wing thy flight unto the paradise of the Placeless."

O son of spirit !

"Burst thy cage asunder, and even as the phoenix of love soar into the firmanent of holiness. Renounce thyself and, filled with the spirit of mercy, abide in the realm of celestial sanctity."

O son of Man !

"Ascend into My heaven, that thou mayest obtain the joy of reunion, and from the chalice of imperishable glory quaff the peerless wine."

O my Servant !

"...This is the river of everlasting life that hath flowed from the well-spring of the pen of the merciful ; well is it with them that drink !"

O son of Passion !

Cleanse thyself from the defilement of riches and in perfect peace advance into the realm of poverty ; that from the well spring of detachment thou mayest quaff the wine of immortal life."

O son of My Handmaid !

"Quaff from the tongue of the merciful the stream of divine mystery..."

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